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TALES OF HUMOR.

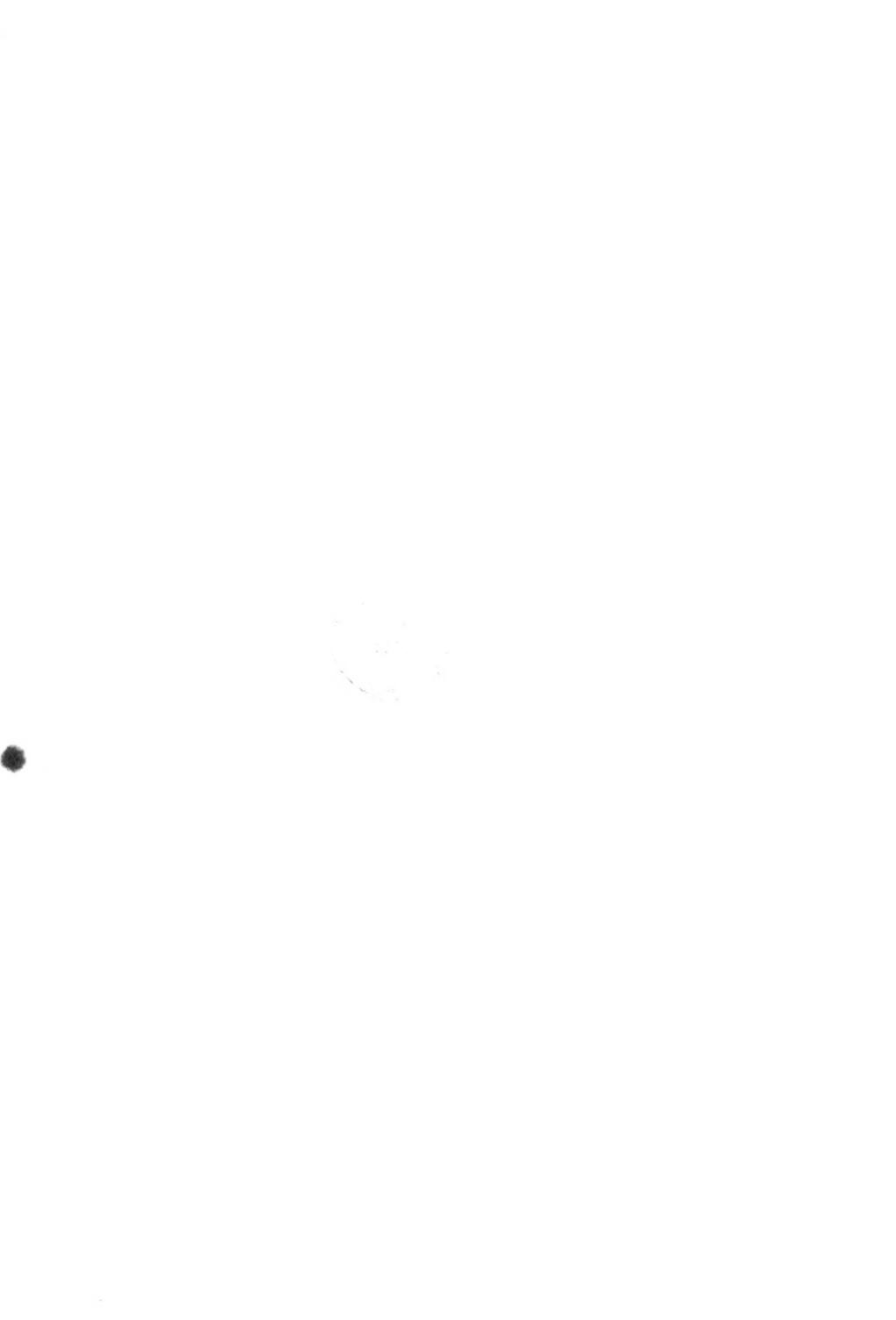




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WORDS WITH A MUMMY





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WORDS WITH A MUMMY

THE TALES AND POEMS
OF
EDGAR ALLAN POE

WITH BIOGRAPHICAL ESSAY

BY
JOHN H. INGRAM

And Twenty Original Etchings, Five Photogravures
and a New Etched Portrait

IN SIX VOLUMES

VOL. III

TALES OF HUMOR

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CONTENTS OF VOL. III.

TALES OF HUMOR.

	PAGE.
NEVER BET THE DEVIL YOUR HEAD	1
A TALE OF JERUSALEM	15
THE THOUSAND-AND-SECOND TALE OF SCHEHERAZADE	21
WHY THE LITTLE FRENCHMAN WEARS HIS HAND IN A SLING	45
BON-BON	53
THE SYSTEM OF DR. TARR AND PROFESSOR FETHER	75
THE LITERARY LIFE OF THINGUM BOB, ESQ.	99
HOW TO WRITE A BLACKWOOD ARTICLE	123
A PREDICAMENT	137
MYSTIFICATION	149
X-ING A PARAGRAB	161
DIDDLING CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE EXACT SCIENCES	171
THE ANGEL OF THE ODD	185
MELLONTA TAUTA	199
LOSS OF BREATH	217
THE MAN THAT WAS USED UP	233
THE BUSINESS MAN	247

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

VOL. III.

	PAGE.
SOME WORDS WITH A MUMMY, <i>Etched by E. Abot after Wogel . . . Frontispiece</i>	
THE SYSTEM OF DR. TARR AND PROFESSOR FETIHER, <i>Drawn and etched by Wogel</i>	75

TALES OF HUMOR.

NEVER BET THE DEVIL YOUR HEAD.

A TALE WITH A MORAL.

“*Con tal que los costumbres de un autor,*” says Don Tomas de las Torres, in the preface to his “Amatory Poems,” “*sean puras y castas, importa muy poco que no sean igualmente severas sus obras*”—meaning, in plain English, that provided the morals of an author are pure personally, it signifies nothing what are the morals of his books. We presume that Don Tomas is now in Purgatory for the assertion. It would be a clever thing, too, in the way of poetical justice, to keep him there until his “Amatory Poems” get out of print, or are laid definitely upon the shelf through lack of readers. Every fiction *should have* a moral; and, what is more to the purpose, the critics have discovered that every fiction *has*. Philip Melanethon, some time ago, wrote a commentary upon the “Batrachomyomachia,” and proved that the poet’s object was to excite a distaste for sedition. Pierre la Seine, going a step farther, shows that the intention was to recommend to young men temperance in eating and drinking. Just so, too, Jacobus Hugo has satisfied himself that, by Euenis, Homer meant to insinuate John Calvin; by Antinœus, Martin Luther; by the Lotophagi, Protestants in general; and by the Harpies, the Dutch. Our more modern Scholiasts are equally

acute. These fellows demonstrate a hidden meaning in "The Antediluvians," a parable in "Powhatan," new views in "Cock Robin," and transcendentalism in "Hop O' My Thumb." In short, it has been shown that no man can sit down to write without a very profound design. Thus to authors in general much trouble is spared. A novelist, for example, need have no care of his moral. It is there—that is to say, it is somewhere—and the moral and the critics can take care of themselves. When the proper time arrives, all that the gentleman intended, and all that he did not intend, will be brought to light, in the "Dial," or the "Down-Easter," together with all that he ought to have intended, and the rest that he clearly meant to intend—so that it will all come very straight in the end.

There is no just ground, therefore, for the charge brought against me by certain ignoramuses—that I have never written a moral tale, or in more precise words, a tale with a moral. They are not the critics predestined to bring me out, and *develop* my morals—that is the secret. By and by the "North American Quarterly Humdrum" will make them ashamed of their stupidity. In the meantime, by way of staying execution—by way of mitigating the accusations against me—I offer the sad history appended ;—a history about whose obvious moral there can be no question whatever, since he who runs may read it in the large capitals which form the title of the tale. I should have credit for this arrangement—a far wiser one than that of La Fontaine and others, who reserve the impression to be conveyed until the last moment, and thus sneak it in at the fag end of their fables.

Defuncti injuriā ne afficiantur was a law of the twelve tables, and *De mortuis nil nisi bonum* is an

excellent injunction—even if the dead in question be nothing but dead small beer. It is not my design therefore to vituperate my deceased friend Toby Dammit. He was a sad dog, it is true, and a dog's death it was that he died; but he himself was not to blame for his vices. They grew out of a personal defect in his mother. She did her best in the way of flogging him while an infant—for duties to her well-regulated mind were always pleasures, and babies, like tough steaks, or the modern Greek olive trees, are invariably the better for beating—but, poor woman! she had the misfortune to be left-handed, and a child flogged left-handedly had better be left unflogged. The world revolves from right to left. It will not do to whip a baby from left to right. If each blow in the proper direction drives an evil propensity out, it follows that every thump in an opposite one knocks its quota of wickedness in. I was often present at Toby's chastisements, and even by the way in which he kicked I could perceive that he was getting worse and worse every day. At last I saw through the tears in my eyes that there was no hope of the villain at all, and one day, when he had been cuffed until he grew so black in the face that one might have mistaken him for a little African, and no effect had been produced beyond that of making him wriggle himself into a fit, I could stand it no longer, but went down upon my knees forthwith, and uplifting my voice, made prophecy of his ruin.

The fact is that his precocity in vice was awful. At five months of age he used to get into such passions that he was unable to articulate. At six months I caught him gnawing a pack of cards. At seven months he was in the constant habit of catching and kissing the female babies. At eight months he peremptorily

refused to put his signature to the temperance pledge. Thus he went on increasing in iniquity, month after month, until, at the close of the first year, he not only insisted upon wearing *moustachios*, but had contracted a propensity for cursing and swearing, and for backing his assertions by bets.

Through this latter most ungentlemanly practice, the ruin which I had predicted to Toby Dammit overtook him at last. The fashion had “grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength,” so that when he came to be a man he could scarcely utter a sentence without interlarding it with a proposition to gamble. Not that he actually *laid* wagers—no. I will do my friend the justice to say that he would as soon have laid eggs. With him the thing was a mere formula—nothing more. His expressions on this head had no meaning attached to them whatever. They were simple if not altogether innocent expletives—imaginative phrases wherewith to round off a sentence. When he said “I’ll bet you so and so,” nobody ever thought of taking him up; but still I could not help thinking it my duty to put him down. The habit was an immoral one, and so I told him. It was a vulgar one—this I begged him to believe. It was discountenanced by society—here I said nothing but the truth. It was forbidden by Act of Congress—here I had not the slightest intention of telling a lie. I remonstrated—but to no purpose. I remonstrated in vain. I entreated—he smiled. I implored—he laughed. I preached—he sneered. I threatened—he swore. I kicked him—he called for the police. I pulled his nose—he blew it, and offered to bet the Devil his head that I would not venture to try that experiment again.

Poverty was another vice which the peculiar physical

deficiency of Dammit's mother had entailed upon her son. He was detestably poor; and this was the reason no doubt that his expletive expressions about betting seldom took a pecuniary turn. I will not be bound to say that I ever heard him make use of such a figure of speech as "I'll bet you a dollar." It was usually "I'll bet you what you please," or, "I'll bet you what you dare," or, "I'll bet you a trifle," or else, more significantly still, "*I'll bet the Devil my head.*"

This latter form seemed to please him best, perhaps because it involved the least risk; for Dammit had become excessively parsimonious. Had any one taken him up, his head was small, and thus his loss would have been small, too. But these are my own reflections, and I am by no means sure that I am right in attributing them to him. At all events the phrase in question grew daily in favor, notwithstanding the gross impropriety of a man betting his brains like bank notes, but this was a point which my friend's perversity of disposition would not permit him to comprehend. In the end he abandoned all other forms of wager, and gave himself up to "*I'll bet the Devil my head*" with a pertinacity and exclusiveness of devotion that displeased not less than it surprised me. I am always displeased by circumstances for which I cannot account. Mysteries force a man to think, and so injure his health. The truth is, there was something in *the air* with which Mr. Dammit was wont to give utterance to his offensive expression—something in his manner of enunciation—which at first interested, and afterwards made me very uneasy—something which, for want of a more definite term at present, I must be permitted to call *queer*, but which Mr. Coleridge would have called mystical, Mr. Kant pantheistical,

Mr. Carlyle wistical, and Mr. Emerson hyperquizzistical. I began not to like it at all. Mr. Dammit's soul was in a perilous state. I resolved to bring all my eloquence into play to save it. I vowed to serve him as St. Patrick, in the Irish chronicle, is said to have served the toad, that is to say "awaken him to a sense of his situation." I addressed myself to the task forthwith. Once more I betook myself to remonstrance. Again I collected my energies for a final attempt at expostulation.

When I had made an end of my lecture, Mr. Dammit indulged himself in some very equivocal behavior. For some moments he remained silent, merely looking me inquisitively in the face. But presently he threw his head to one side, and elevated his eyebrows to great extent. Then he spread out the palms of his hands and shrugged up his shoulders. Then he winked with the right eye. Then he repeated the operation with the left. Then he shut them both up very tight. Then he opened them both so very wide that I became seriously alarmed for the consequences. Then, applying his thumb to his nose, he thought proper to make an indescribable movement with the rest of his fingers. Finally, setting his arms akimbo, he condescended to reply.

I can call to mind only the heads of his discourse. He would be obliged to me if I would hold my tongue. He wished none of my advice. He despised all my insinuations. He was old enough to take care of himself. Did I still think him baby Dammit? Did I mean to say anything against his character? Did I intend to insult him? Was I a fool? Was my maternal parent aware, in a word, of my absence from the domiciliary residence? He would put this latter question to me as a man of veracity, and he would

bind himself to abide by my reply. Once more he would demand explicitly if my mother knew that I was out. My confusion, he said, betrayed me, and he would be willing to bet the Devil his head that she did not.

Mr. Dammit did not pause for my rejoinder. Turning upon his heel, he left my presence with undignified precipitation. It was well for him that he did so. My feelings had been wounded. Even my anger had been aroused. For once I would have taken him up upon his insulting wager. I would have won for the arch-enemy Mr. Dammit's little head—for the fact is, my mamma *was* very well aware of my merely temporary absence from home.

But *Khôda shefa midched*—Heaven gives relief—as the Mussulmans say when you tread upon their toes. It was in pursuance of my duty that I had been insulted, and I bore the insult like a man. It now seemed to me, however, that I had done all that could be required of me in the case of this miserable individual, and I resolved to trouble him no longer with my counsel, but to leave him to his conscience and himself. But although I forbore to intrude with my advice, I could not bring myself to give up his society altogether. I even went so far as to humor some of his less reprehensible propensities; and there were times when I found myself lauding his wicked jokes, as epicures do mustard, with tears in my eyes, so profoundly did it grieve me to hear his evil talk.

One fine day having strolled out together, arm in arm, our route led us in the direction of a river. There was a bridge, and we resolved to cross it. It was roofed over, by way of protection from the weather, and the archway having but few windows was thus very uncomfortably dark. As we entered the passage,

the contrast between the external glare and the interior gloom struck heavily upon my spirits. Not so upon those of the unhappy Dammit, who offered to bet the Devil his head that I was hipped. He seemed to be in an unusual good humor. He was excessively lively —so much so that I entertained I know not what of uneasy suspicion. It is not impossible that he was affected with the transcendentalists. I am not well enough versed, however, in the diagnosis of this disease to speak with decision upon the point; and unhappily there were none of my friends of the "Dial" present. I suggest the idea, nevertheless, because of a certain species of austere Merry-Andrewism which seemed to beset my poor friend, and caused him to make quite a Tom-Fool of himself. Nothing would serve him but wriggling and skipping about under and over everything that came in his way; now shouting out, and now lisping out, all manner of odd little and big words, yet preserving the greatest face in the world all the time. I really could not make up my mind whether to kick or to pity him. At length, having passed nearly across the bridge we approached the termination of the foot-way, when our progress was impeded by a turnstile of some height. Through this I made my way quietly, pushing it around as usual. But this turn would not serve the the turn of Mr. Dammit. He insisted upon leaping the stile, and said he could cut a pigeon-wing over it in the air. Now this, conscientiously speaking, I did not think he could do. The best pigeon-winger over all kinds of stile was my friend Mr. Carlyle, and as I knew *he* could not do it, I would not believe that it could be done by Toby Dammit. I therefore told him, in so many words, that he was a braggadocio, and could not do what he said. For this I had reason to be sorry

afterwards ;—for he straightway offered to *bet the Devil his head* that he could.

I was about to reply, notwithstanding my previous resolutions, with some remonstrance against his impiety, when I heard, close at my elbow, a slight cough, which sounded very much like the ejaculation “*ahem!*” I started, and looked about me in surprise. My glance at length fell into a nook of the framework of the bridge, and upon the figure of a little lame old gentleman of venerable aspect. Nothing could be more reverend than his whole appearance; for he not only had on a full suit of black, but his shirt was perfectly clean, and the collar turned very neatly down over a white cravat, while his hair was parted in front like a girl’s. His hands were clasped pensively together, over his stomach, and his two eyes were carefully rolled up into the top of his head.

Upon observing him more closely, I perceived that he wore a black silk apron over his small clothes; and this was a thing which I thought very odd. Before I had time to make any remark, however, upon so singular a circumstance, he interrupted me with a second “*ahem!*”

To this observation I was not immediately prepared to reply. The fact is, remarks of this laconic nature are nearly unanswerable. I have known a Quarterly Reviewer *nonplussed* by the word “*Fudge!*” I am not ashamed to say, therefore, that I turned to Mr. Dammit for assistance.

“Dammit,” said I, “what are you about? don’t you hear?—the gentleman says ‘*ahem!*’” I looked sternly at my friend while I thus addressed him; for, to say the truth, I felt particularly puzzled, and when a man is particularly puzzled he must knit his brows and look savage, or else he is pretty sure to look like a fool.

"Dammit," observed I—although this sounded very much like an oath, than which nothing was farther from my thoughts—"Dammit," I suggested—"the gentleman says '*ahem!*'"

I do not attempt to defend my remark on the score of profundity; I did not think it profound myself; but I have noticed that the effect of our speeches is not always proportionate with their importance in our own eyes; and if I had shot Mr. D. through and through with a Paixhan bomb, or knocked him on the head with the "Poets and Poetry of America," he could hardly have been more discomfited than when I addressed him with those simple words—"Dammit, what are you about?—don't you hear?—the gentleman says '*ahem!*'"

"You don't say so?" gasped he at length, after turning more colors than a pirate runs up, one after the other, when chased by a man-of-war. "Are you quite sure he said *that*? Well, at all events I am in for it now, and may as well put a bold face upon the matter. Here goes, then—*ahem!*"

At this the little old gentleman seemed pleased—God only knows why. He left his station at the nook of the bridge, limped forward with a gracious air, took Dammit by the hand and shook it cordially, looking all the while straight up in his face with an air of the most unadulterated benignity which it is possible for the mind of man to imagine.

"I am quite sure you will win it, Dammit," said he, with the frankest of all smiles, "but we are obliged to have a trial you know, for the sake of mere form."

"Ahem!" replied my friend, taking off his coat with a deep sigh, tying a pocket-handkerchief around his waist, and producing an unaccountable alteration in his

countenance by twisting up his eyes, and bringing down the corners of his mouth—"ahem!" And "ahem," said he again, after a pause; and not another word more than "ahem!" did I ever know him to say after that. "Aha!" thought I, without expressing myself aloud—"this is quite a remarkable silence on the part of Toby Dammit, and is no doubt a consequence of his verbosity upon a previous occasion. One extreme induces another. I wonder if he has forgotten the many unanswerable questions which he propounded to me so fluently on the day when I gave him my last lecture? At all events he is cured of the transcendentalists."

"Ahem!" here replied Toby, just as if he had been reading my thoughts, and looking like a very old sheep in a reverie.

The old gentleman now took him by the arm, and led him more into the shade of the bridge—a few paces back from the turnstile. "My good fellow," said he, "I make it a point of conscience to allow you this much run. Wait here till I take my place by the stile, so that I may see whether you go over it handsomely, and transcendently, and don't omit any flourishes of the pigeon-wing. A mere form, you know. I will say 'one, two, three, and away.' Mind you start at the word 'away.'" Here he took his position by the stile, paused a moment as if in profound reflection, then *looked up*, and, I thought, smiled very slightly, then tightened the strings of his apron, then took a long look at Dammit, and finally gave the word as agreed upon—

One—two—three—and away!

Punctually at the word "away," my poor friend set off in a strong gallop. The stile was not very high, like Mr. Lord's—nor yet very low, like that of Mr.

Lord's reviewers, but upon the whole I made sure that he would clear it. And then what if he did not!—ah, that was the question—what if he did not? “What right,” said I, “had the old gentleman to make any other gentleman jump? The little old dot-and-carry-one! who is *he*? If he asks *me* to jump, I won’t do it, that’s flat, and I don’t care who *the devil he is*.” The bridge, as I say, was arched and covered in, in a very ridiculous manner, and there was a most uncomfortable echo about it at all times—an echo which I never before so particularly observed as when I uttered the four last words of my remark.

But what I said, or what I thought, or what I heard, occupied only an instant. In less than five seconds from his starting my poor Toby had taken the leap. I saw him run nimbly and spring grandly from the floor of the bridge, cutting the most awful flourishes with his legs as he went up. I saw him high in the air, pigeon-winging it to admiration just over the top of the stile, and of course I thought it an unusually singular thing that he did not *continue* to go over. But the whole leap was the affair of a moment, and, before I had a chance to make any profound reflections, down came Mr. Dammit on the flat of his back, on the same side of the stile from which he had started. At the same instant I saw the old gentleman limping off at the top of his speed, having caught and wrapped up in his apron something that fell heavily into it from the darkness of the arch just over the turnstile. At all this I was much astonished; but I had no leisure to think, for Mr. Dammit lay particularly still, and I concluded that his feelings had been hurt, and that he stood in need of my assistance. I hurried up to him and found that he had received

what might be termed a serious injury. The truth is, he had been deprived of his head, which after a close search I could not find anywhere; so I determined to take him home and send for the homeopathists. In the meantime a thought struck me, and I threw open an adjacent window of the bridge, when the sad truth flashed upon me at once. About five feet just above the top of the turnstile, and crossing the arch of the footpath so as to constitute a brace, there extended a flat iron bar, lying with its breadth horizontally, and forming one of a series that served to strengthen the structure throughout its extent. With the edge of this brace it appeared evident that the neck of my unfortunate friend had come precisely in contact.

He did not long survive his terrible loss. The homeopathists did not give him little enough physic, and what little they did give him he hesitated to take. So in the end he grew worse, and at length died, a lesson to all riotous livers. I bedewed his grave with my tears, worked a *bar* sinister on his family escutcheon, and, for the general expenses of his funeral, sent in my very moderate bill to the transcendentalists. The scoundrels refused to pay it, so I had Mr. Dammit dug up at once, and sold him for dog's meat.



A TALE OF JERUSALEM.

Intensos rigidam in frontem ascendere eanos
Passus erat ——————
————— a bristly bore.
—LUCAN—DE CATONE
—TRANSLATION.

“Let us hurry to the walls,” said Abel-Phittim to Buzi-Ben-Levi and Simeon the Pharisee, on the tenth day of the month Thammuz, in the year of the world three thousand nine hundred and forty-one—“let us hasten to the ramparts adjoining the gates of Benjamin, which is in the city of David, and overlooking the camp of the uncircumcised; for it is the last hour of the fourth watch, being sunrise; and the idolaters, in fulfilment of the promise of Pompey, should be awaiting us with the lambs for the sacrifices.”

Simeon, Abel-Phittim, and Buzi-Ben-Levi were the Gizbarim, or sub-collectors of the offering, in the holy city of Jerusalem.

“Verily,” replied the Pharisee, “let us hasten; for this generosity in the heathen is unwonted; and fickle-mindedness has ever been an attribute of the worshipers of Baal.”

“That they are fickle-minded and treacherous is as true as the Pentateuch,” said Buzi-Ben-Levi, “but that is only towards the people of Adonai. When was it ever known that the Ammonites proved wanting to their own interests? Methinks it is no great stretch of

generosity to allow us lambs for the altar of the Lord, receiving in lieu thereof thirty silver shekels per head!"

"Thou forgettest, however, Ben-Levi," replied Abel-Phittim, "that the Roman Pompey, who is now impiously besieging the city of the Most High, has no security that we apply not the lambs thus purchased for the altar to the sustenance of the body, rather than of the spirit."

"Now, by the five corners of my beard," shouted the Pharisee, who belonged to the sect called The Dashers (that little knot of saints whose manner of *dashing* and lacerating the feet against the pavement was long a thorn and a reproach to less zealous devotees—a stumbling-block to less gifted perambulators)—"by the five corners of that beard which as a priest I am forbidden to shave!—have we lived to see the day when a blaspheming and idolatrous upstart of Rome shall accuse us of appropriating to the appetites of the flesh the most holy and consecrated elements? Have we lived to see the day when"—

"Let us not question the motives of the Philistine," interrupted Abel-Phittim, "for to day we profit for the first time by his avarice or by his generosity; but rather let us hurry to the ramparts, lest offerings should be wanting for that altar whose fire the rains of heavens cannot extinguish, and whose pillars of smoke no tempest can turn aside."

That part of the city to which our worthy Gizbarim now hastened, and which bore the name of its architect, King David, was esteemed the most strongly fortified district of Jerusalem, being situated upon the steep and lofty hill of Zion. Here a broad, deep circumvallatory trench, hewn from the solid rock, was defended by a wall of great strength erected upon its

inner edge. This wall was adorned, at regular inter-spaces, by square towers of white marble; the lowest sixty, and the highest one hundred and twenty cubits in height. But, in the vicinity of the gate of Benjamin, the wall arose by no means from the margin of the fosse. On the contrary, between the level of the ditch and the basement of the rampart sprang up a perpendicular cliff of two hundred and fifty cubits; forming part of the precipitous Mount Moriah. So when Simeon and his associates arrived on the summit of the tower called Adoni-Bezek—the loftiest of all the turrets around about Jerusalem, and the usual place of conference with the besieging army—they looked down upon the camp of the enemy from an eminence excelling by many feet that of the Pyramid of Cheops, and, by several, that of the temple of Belus.

“Verily,” sighed the Pharisee, as he peered dizzily over the precipice, “the uncircumcised are as the sands by the sea-shore—as the locusts in the wilderness! The valley of The King hath become the valley of Adommin.”

“And yet,” added Ben-Levi, “thou canst not point me out a Philistine—no, not one—from Aleph to Tau—from the wilderness to the battlements—who seemeth any bigger than the letter Jod!”

“Lower away the basket with the shekels of silver!” here shouted a Roman soldier in a hoarse, rough voice, which appeared to issue from the regions of Pluto—“lower away the basket with the accursed coin which it has broken the jaw of a noble Roman to pronounce! Is it thus you evince your gratitude to our master Pompeius, who, in his condescension, has thought fit to listen to your idolatrous importunities? The god Phebus, who is a true god, has been charioted for an hour—and

were you not to be on the ramparts by sunrise? *Ædepol!* do you think that we, the conquerors of the world, have nothing better to do than stand waiting by the walls of every kennel to traffic with the dogs of the earth? Lower away! I say—and see that your trumpery be bright in color, and just in weight!"

"*El Elohim!*" ejaculated the Pharisee, as the discordant tones of the centurion rattled up the crags of the precipice, and fainted away against the temple—" *El Elohim!*—*who* is God Phœbus? *whom* doth the blasphemer invoke? Thou Buzi-Ben-Levi! who art read in the laws of the Gentiles, and hast sojourned among them who dabble with the Teraphim!—is it Nergal of whom the idolater speaketh?—or Ashimah—or Nibhaz?—or Tartak?—or Adramalech?—or Anamalech?—or Succoth-Benith?—or Dagon?—or Belial?—or Baal-Perith?—or Baal-Peor?—or Baal-Zebub?"

"Verily it is neither—but beware how thou lettest the rope slip too rapidly through thy fingers; for should the wicker-work chance to hang on the projection of yonder crag, there will be a woeful outpouring of the holy things of the sanctuary."

By the assistance of some rudely constructed machinery, the heavily laden basket was now carefully lowered down among the multitude; and, from the giddy pinnacle, the Romans were seen gathering confusedly round it; but owing to the vast height and the prevalence of a fog, no distinct view of their operations could be obtained.

Half-an-hour had already elapsed.

"We shall be too late," sighed the Pharisee, as, at the expiration of this period, he looked over into the abyss—"we shall be too late! we shall be turned out of office by the Katholim."

"No more," responded Abel-Phittim, "no more shall

we feast upon the fat of the land—no longer shall our beards be odorous with frankincense—our loins girded up with fine linen from the Temple.”

“Raea !” swore Ben-Levi, “Raea ! do they mean to defraud us of the purchase-money ? or, Holy Moses ! are they weighing the shekels of the tabernacle ?”

“They have given the signal at last,” cried the Pharisee, “they have given the signal at last!—pull away, Abel-Phittim!—and thou, Buzi-Ben-Levi, pull away!—for verily the Philistines have either still hold upon the basket, or the Lord hath softened their hearts to place therein a beast of good weight!” And the Gizbarim pulled away, while their burthen swung heavily upwards through the still increasing mist.

* * * * *

“Booshoh he !”—as, at the conclusion of an hour, some object at the extremity of the rope became indistinctly visible—“Booshoh he !” was the exclamation which burst from the lips of Ben-Levi.

“Booshoh he !—for shame!—it is a ram from the thickets of Engedi, and as rugged as the valley of Jehoshaphat !”

“It is a firstling of the flock,” said Abel-Phittim, “I know him by the bleating of his lips, and the innocent folding of his limbs. His eyes are more beautiful than the jewels of the Pectoral, and his flesh is like the honey of Hebron.”

“It is a fatted calf from the pastures of Bashan,” said the Pharisee, “the heathen have dealt wonderfully with us!—let us raise up our voices in a psalm!—let us give thanks on the shawn and on the psaltery—on the harp and on the huggab—on the eythern and on the sackbut !”

It was not until the basket had arrived within a few

feet of the Gizbarim, that a low grunt betrayed to their perception a *hog* of no common size.

“Now, El Emanu !” slowly, and with upturned eyes, ejaculated the trio, as, letting go their hold, the emancipated porker tumbled headlong among the Philistines, “El Emanu!—God be with us!—*it is the unutterable flesh?*”

THE THOUSAND-AND-SECOND TALE OF SCHEHERAZADE.

Truth is stranger than fiction.—OLD SAYING.

Having had occasion, lately, in the course of some Oriental investigations, to consult the *Tellmenow Isitsoörnot*, a work which (like the Zohar of Simeon Jochaides) is scarcely known at all, even in Europe, and which has never been quoted to my knowledge by any American—if we except, perhaps the author of the “Curiosities of American Literature”—having had occasion, I say, to turn over some pages of the first-mentioned very remarkable work, I was not a little astonished to discover that the literary world has hitherto been strangely in error respecting the fate of the vizier’s daughter, Scheherazade, as that fate is depicted in the “Arabian Nights;” and that the *dénouément* there given, if not altogether inaccurate as far as it goes, is at least to blame in not having gone very much farther.

For full information on this interesting topic I must refer the inquisitive reader to the “Isitsoörnot” itself; but in the meantime I shall be pardoned for giving a summary of what I there discovered.

It will be remembered that in the usual version of the tales, a certain monarch having good cause to be jealous of his queen, not only puts her to death, but makes a vow by his beard and the prophet to espouse each

night the most beautiful maiden in his dominions, and the next morning to deliver her up to the executioner.

Having fulfilled this vow for many years to the letter, and with a religious punctuality and method that conferred great credit upon him as a man of devout feelings and excellent sense, he was interrupted one afternoon (no doubt at his prayers) by a visit from his grand vizier, to whose daughter it appears there had occurred an idea.

Her name was Scheherazade, and her idea was that she would either redeem the land from the depopulating tax upon its beauty, or perish, after the approved fashion of all heroines, in the attempt.

Accordingly, and although we do not find it to be leap-year (which makes the sacrifice more meritorious), she deputes her father, the grand vizier, to make an offer to the king of her hand. This hand the king eagerly accepts—(he had intended to take it at all events, and had put off the matter from day to day only through fear of the vizier)—but in accepting it now he gives all parties very distinctly to understand that, grand vizier or no grand vizier, he has not the slightest design of giving up one iota of his vow or of his privileges. When, therefore, the fair Scheherazade insisted upon marrying the king, and did actually marry him despite her father's excellent advice not to do anything of the kind—when she would and did marry him, I say, will I nill I, it was with her beautiful black eyes as thoroughly open as the nature of the case would allow.

It seems, however, that this politic damsel (who had been reading Machiavelli beyond doubt) had a very ingenious little plot in her mind. On the night of the wedding she contrived, upon I forget what specious pretence, to have her sister occupy a couch sufficiently near that of the royal pair to admit of easy conversa-

tion from bed to bed ; and a little before cock-crowing she took care to awaken the good monarch, her husband (who bore her none the worse will because he intended to wring her neck on the morrow)—she managed to awaken him, I say (although, on account of a capital conscience and an easy digestion, he slept well), by the profound interest of a story (about a rat and a black cat, I think), which she was narrating (all in an undertone, of course) to her sister. When the day broke it so happened that this history was not altogether finished, and that Scheherazade, in the nature of things, could not finish it just then, since it was high time for her to get up and be bowstrung—a thing very little more pleasant than hanging, only a trifle more genteel !

The king's euriosity, however, prevailing, I am sorry to say, even over his sound religious principles, induced him for this once to postpone the fulfillment of his vow until next morning, for the purpose and with the hope of hearing that night how it fared in the end with the black cat (a black eat, I think it was) and the rat.

The night having arrived, however, the lady Scheherazade not only put the finishing stroke to the black eat and the rat (the rat was blue), but before she well knew what she was about, found herself deep in the intrieacies of a narration having reference (if I am not altogether mistaken) to a pink horse (with green wings) that went in a violent manner by clockwork, and was wound up with an indigo key. With this history the king was even more profoundly interested than with the other ; and as the day broke before its conclusion (notwithstanding all the queen's endeavor to get through with it in time for the bowstring), there was again no recourse but to postpone that ceremony as before for twenty-four hours. The next night there happened a

similar accident with a similar result ; and then the next—and then again the next ; so that, in the end, the good monarch having been unavoidably deprived of all opportunity to keep his vow during a period of no less than one thousand and one nights, either forgets it altogether by the expiration of this time, or gets himself absolved of it in the regular way, or (what is more probable) breaks it outright, as well as the head of his father confessor. At all events, Scheherazade, who, being lineally descended from Eve, fell heir perhaps to the whole seven baskets of talk, which the latter lady, we all know, picked up from under the trees in the garden of Eden—Scheherazade, I say, finally triumphed, and the tariff on beauty was repealed.

Now this conclusion (which is that of the story as we have it upon record) is, no doubt, excessively proper and pleasant—but alas ! like a great many pleasant things, is more pleasant than true ; and I am indebted altogether to the “Isitsoörnot” for the means of correcting the error. “*Le mieux,*” says a French proverb, “*est l’ennemi du bien,*” and in mentioning that Scheherazade had inherited the seven baskets of talk, I should have added that she put them out at compound interest until they amounted to seventy-seven.

“My dear sister,” said she, on the thousand-and-second night (I quote the language of the “Isitsoörnot” at this point *verbatim*), “my dear sister,” said she, “now that all this little difficulty about the bowstring has blown over, and that this odious tax is so happily repealed, I feel that I have been guilty of great indiscretion in withholding from you and the king (who, I am sorry to say, snores—a thing no gentleman would do) the full conclusion of the history of Sinbad the sailor. This person went through numerous other and

more interesting adventures than those which I related ; but the truth is I felt sleepy on the particular night of their narration, and so was seduced into cutting them short—a grievous piece of misconduct for which I only trust that Allah will forgive me. But even yet it is not too late to remedy my great neglect, and as soon as I have given the king a pinch or two in order to wake him up so far that he may stop making that horrible noise, I will forthwith entertain you (and him, if he pleases) with the sequel of this very remarkable story.”

Hereupon the sister of Scheherazade, as I have it from the “Isitsoörnot,” expressed no very particular intensity of gratification ; but the king, having been sufficiently pinched, at length ceased snoring, and finally said “Hum!” and then “Hoo!” when the queen, understanding these words (which are no doubt Arabic) to signify that he was all attention, and would do his best not to snore any more—the queen, I say, having arranged these matters to her satisfaction, re-entered thus at once into the history of Sinbad the sailor.

“‘At length, in my old age’ (these are the words of Sinbad himself, as retailed by Scheherazade),—‘at length, in my old age, and after enjoying many years of tranquility at home, I became once more possessed with a desire of visiting foreign countries ; and one day, without acquainting any of my family with my design, I packed up some bundles of such merchandise as was most precious and least bulky, and engaging a porter to carry them, went with him down to the sea-shore, to await the arrival of any chance vessel that might convey me out of the kingdom into some region which I had not as yet explored.

“‘Having deposited the packages upon the sands, we sat down beneath some trees, and looked out into the

ocean in the hope of perceiving a ship, but during several hours we saw none whatever. At length I fancied that I could hear a singular buzzing or humming sound, and the porter, after listening awhile, declared that he also could distinguish it. Presently it grew louder, and then still louder, so that we could have no doubt that the object which caused it was approaching us. At length on the edge of the horizon we discovered a black speck, which rapidly increased in size until we made it out to be a vast monster, swimming with a great part of its body above the surface of the sea. It came towards us with inconceivable swiftness, throwing up huge waves of foam around its breast, and illuminating all that part of the sea through which it passed with a long line of fire that extended far off into the distance.

“As the thing drew near we saw it very distinctly. Its length was equal to that of three of the loftiest trees that grow, and it was as wide as the great hall of audience in your palace, O most sublime and munificent of the caliphs! Its body, which was unlike that of ordinary fishes, was as solid as a rock, and of a jetty blackness throughout all that portion of it which floated above the water, with the exception of a narrow blood-red streak that completely begirdled it. The belly, which floated beneath the surface, and of which we could get only a glimpse now and then as the monster rose and fell with the billows, was entirely covered with metallic scales, of a color like that of the moon in misty weather. The back was flat and nearly white, and from it there extended upwards of six spines, about half the length of the whole body.

“This horrible creature had no mouth that we could perceive; but, as if to make up for this deficiency, it was provided with at least fourscore of eyes, that pro-

truded from their sockets like those of the green dragon-fly, and were arranged all around the body in two rows, one above the other, and parallel to the blood-red streak, which seemed to answer the purpose of an eyebrow. Two or three of these dreadful eyes were much larger than the others, and had the appearance of solid gold.

“‘ Although this beast approached us, as I have before said, with the greatest rapidity, it must have been moved altogether by necromancy—for it had neither fins like a fish, nor web-feet like a duck, nor wings like the sea-shell which is blown along in the manner of a vessel ; nor yet did it writhe itself forward as do the eels. Its head and its tail were shaped precisely alike, only not far from the latter were two small holes that served for nostrils, and through which the monster puffed out its thick breath with prodigious violence, and with a shrieking disagreeable noise.

“‘ Our terror at beholding this hideous thing was very great ; but it was even surpassed by our astonishment, when, upon getting a nearer look, we perceived upon the creature’s back a vast number of animals about the size and shape of men and altogether much resembling them, except that they wore no garments (as men do), being supplied (by nature, no doubt), with an ugly uncomfortable covering a good deal like cloth, but fitting so tight to the skin as to render the poor wretches laughably awkward, and put them apparently to severe pain. On the very tips of their heads were certain square-looking boxes, which, at first sight, I thought might have been intended to answer as turbans, but I soon discovered that they were excessively heavy and solid, and I therefore concluded they were contrivances designed, by their great weight, to

keep the heads of the animals steady and safe upon their shoulders. Around the necks of the creatures were fastened black collars (badges of servitude, no doubt), such as we keep on our dogs, only much wider and infinitely stiffer—so that it was quite impossible for these poor victims to move their heads in any direction without moving the body at the same time; and thus they were doomed to perpetual contemplation of their noses—a view puggish and snubby in a wonderful if not positively in an awful degree.

“‘ When the monster had nearly reached the shore where we stood, it suddenly pushed out one of its eyes to a great extent, and emitted from it a terrible flash of fire, accompanied by a dense cloud of smoke, and a noise that I can compare to nothing but thunder. As the smoke cleared away, we saw one of the odd man-animals standing near the head of the large beast, with a trumpet in his hand, through which (putting it to his mouth) he presently addressed us in loud, harsh, and disagreeable accents, that perhaps we should have mistaken for language had they not come altogether through the nose.

“‘ Being thus evidently spoken to, I was at a loss how to reply, as I could in no manner understand what was said; and in this difficulty I turned to the porter, who was near swooning through affright, and demanded of him his opinion as to what species of monster it was, what it wanted, and what kind of creatures those were that so swarmed upon its back. To this the porter replied, as well as he could for trepidation, that he had once before heard of this sea-beast; that it was a cruel demon, with bowels of sulphur and blood of fire, created by evil genii as the means of inflicting misery upon mankind; that the things upon its back were vermin, such as sometimes infest cats and dogs, only a little larger and

more savage ; and that these vermin had their uses, however evil—for through the torture they caused the beast by their nibblings and stingings, it was goaded into that degree of wrath which was requisite to make it roar and commit ill, and so fulfil the vengeful and malicious designs of the wicked genii.

“ ‘ This account determined me to take to my heels, and without once even looking behind me I ran at full speed up into the hills, while the porter ran equally fast, although nearly in an opposite direction, so that by these means he finally made his escape with my bundles, of which, I have no doubt, he took excellent care, although this is a point I cannot determine, as I do not remember that I ever beheld him again.

“ ‘ For myself, I was so hotly pursued by a swarm of the men-vermin (who had come to the shore in boats) that I was very soon overtaken, bound hand and foot, and conveyed to the beast, which immediately swam out again into the middle of the sea.

“ ‘ I now bitterly repented my folly in quitting a comfortable home to peril my life in such adventures as this ; but regret being useless, I made the best of my condition, and exerted myself to secure the good will of the man-animal that owned the trumpet, and who appeared to exercise authority over its fellows. I succeeded so well in this endeavor that in a few days the creature bestowed upon me various tokens of its favor, and in the end even went to the trouble of teaching me the rudiments of what it was vain enough to denominate its language ; so that at length I was enabled to converse with it readily, and came to make it comprehend the ardent desire I had of seeing the world.

“ ‘ “ Washish squashish squeak, Sinbad, hey-diddle diddle, grunt unt grumble, hiss, fiss, whiss,” said he to me

one day after dinner—but I beg a thousand pardons, I had forgotten that your majesty is not conversant with the dialect of the Cock-neighs (so the man-animals were called; I presume because their language formed the connecting link between that of the horse and that of the rooster). With your permission I will translate. "*Washish squashish*," and so forth:—that is to say, "I am happy to find, my dear Sinbad, that you are really a very excellent fellow; we are now about doing a thing which is called circumnavigating the globe; and since you are so desirous of seeing the world, I will strain a point and give you a free passage upon the back of the beast." ””

When the Lady Scheherazade had proceeded thus far, relates the "*Isitsoörnot*," the king turned over from his left side to his right, and said :

"It is in fact *very* surprising, my dear queen, that you omitted hitherto these latter adventures of Sinbad. Do you know I think them exceedingly entertaining and strange?"

The king having thus expressed himself, we are told the fair Scheherazade resumed her history in the following words :

"Sinbad went on in this manner with his narrative : 'I thanked the man-animal for its kindness, and soon found myself very much at home on the beast, which swam at a prodigious rate through the ocean, although the surface of the latter is, in that part of the world, by no means flat, but round like a pomegranate, so that we went, so to say, either up hill or down hill all the time.' "

"That, I think, was very singular," interrupted the king.

"Nevertheless, it is quite true," replied Scheherazade.

"I have my doubts," rejoined the king; "but, pray, be so good as to go on with the story."

"I will," said the queen. "'The beast,' continued Sinbad, 'swam, as I have related, up hill and down hill, until at length we arrived at an island many hundreds of miles in circumference, but which, nevertheless, had been built in the middle of the sea by a colony of little things like caterpillars.'"^{*}

"Hum!" said the king.

"'Leaving this island,' said Sinbad—(for Scheherazade, it must be understood, took no notice of her husband's ill-mannered ejaculation)—'leaving this island, we came to another where the forests were of solid stone, and so hard that they shivered to pieces the finest-tempered axes with which we endeavored to cut them down.'"[†]

*The coralites.

†"One of the most remarkable natural curiosities in Texas is a petrified forest, near the head of Pesigno River. It consists of several hundred trees, in an erect position, all turned to stone. Some trees now growing are partly petrified. This is a startling fact for natural philosophers, and must cause them to modify the existing theory of petrifaction."—*Kennedy*.

This account, at first discredited, has since been corroborated by the discovery of a completely petrified forest near the headwaters of the Chayenne, or Chienne, River, which has its source in the Black Hills of the Rocky chain.

There is scarcely, perhaps, a spectacle on the surface of the globe more remarkable, either in a geological or picturesque point of view, than that presented by the petrified forest near Cairo. The traveler, having passed the tombs of the caliphs, just beyond the gates of the city, proceeds to the southward, nearly at right angles to the road across the desert to Suez, and, after having traveled some ten miles up a low barren valley, covered with sand, gravel, and sea-shells, fresh as if the tide had retired but yesterday, crosses a low range of sandhills, which has for some distance run parallel to his path. The scene now presented to him is beyond conception singular and desolate. A mass of fragments of trees, all converted into stone, and when struck by his horse's hoofs ringing like cast-iron, is seen to extend itself for miles and miles around him in the form of a decayed and prostrate forest. The wood is of a dark brown hue, but retains its form in perfection, the pieces being from one to fifteen feet in length, and from half a foot to three feet in thickness, strewed so closely together,

“Hum!” said the king again; but Scheherazade, paying him no attention, continued in the language of Sinbad. “‘ Passing beyond this last island, we reached a country where there was a cave that ran to the distance of thirty or forty miles within the bowels of the earth, and that contained a greater number of far more spacious and more magnificent palaces than are to be found in all Damascus and Bagdad. From the roofs of these palaces there hung myriads of gems, like diamonds, but larger than men; and in among the streets of towers and pyramids and temples there flowed immense rivers as black as ebony, and swarming with fish that had no eyes.’”*

“Hum!” said the king.

“‘ We then swam into a region of the sea where we found a lofty mountain, down whose sides there streamed torrents of melted metal, some of which were twelve miles wide and sixty miles long;† while from an abyss on the summit issued so vast a quantity of ashes that the sun was entirely blotted out from the heavens, and it became darker than the darkest midnight, so that when we were even at a distance of a hundred and fifty miles from the mountain, it was impossible to see the whitest object, however close we held it to our eyes.’”‡

as far as the eye can reach, that an Egyptian donkey can scarcely thread its way through amongst them, and so natural that, were it in Scotland or Ireland, it might pass without remark for some enormous drained bog on which the exhumed trees lay rotting in the sun. The roots and rudiments of the branches are in many cases nearly perfect, and in some the worm-holes eaten under the bark are readily recognizable. The most delicate of the sap vessels, and all the finer portions of the centre of the wood, are perfectly entire, and bear to be examined with the strongest magnifiers. The whole are so thoroughly silicified as to scratch glass and be capable of receiving the highest polish.—*Asiatic Magazine*.

*The Mammoth Cave of Kentucky.

† In Iceland, 1783.

‡ “During the eruption of Hecla in 1766 clouds of this kind produced such a degree of darkness that at Glaumba, which is more than fifty leagues from the mountain, people could only find their way by groping.

“Hum!” said the king.

“After quitting this coast, the beast continued his voyage until we met with a land in which the nature of things seemed reversed—for we here saw a great lake, at the bottom of which, more than a hundred feet beneath the surface of the water, there flourished in full leaf a forest of tall and luxuriant trees.”*

“Hoo!” said the king.

“Some hundred miles farther on brought us to a climate where the atmosphere was so dense as to sustain iron or steel, just as our own does feathers.”†

“Fiddle de dee,” said the king.

“Proceeding still in the same direction, we presently arrived at the most magnificent region in the whole world. Through it there meandered a glorious river for several thousands of miles. This river was of unspeakable depth, and of a transparency richer than that of amber. It was from three to six miles in width, and its banks, which arose on either side to twelve hundred feet in perpendicular height, were crowned with ever-blossoming trees and perpetual sweet-scented flowers that made the whole territory one gorgeous garden, but the

During the eruption of Vesuvius in 1794 at Caserta, four leagues distant, people could only walk by the light of torches. On the first of May, 1812, a cloud of volcanic ashes and sand, coming from a volcano in the island of St. Vincent, covered the whole of the Barbadoes, spreading over it so intense a darkness that at midday, in the open air, one could not perceive the trees or other objects near him, or even a white handkerchief placed at the distance of six inches from the eye.”—*Murray*, p. 215, *Phil. edit.*

* “In the year 1790, in the Caracas, during an earthquake, a portion of the granite soil sank and left a lake eight hundred yards in diameter and from eighty to one hundred feet deep. It was a part of the forest of Aripao which sank, and the trees remained green for several months under the water.”—*Murray*, p. 221.

† The hardest steel ever manufactured may, under the action of a blow-pipe, be reduced to an impalpable powder, which will float readily in the atmospheric air.

name of this luxuriant land was the kingdom of Horror, and to enter it was inevitable death.’’*

“Humph!” said the king.

“‘We left this kingdom in great haste, and after some days came to another, where we were astonished to perceive myriads of monstrous animals, with horns resembling scythes upon their heads. These hideous beasts dig for themselves vast caverns in the soil of a funnel shape, and line the sides of them with rocks, so disposed one upon the other that they fall instantly when trodden upon by other animals, thus precipitating them into the monsters’ dens, where their blood is immediately sucked, and their carcasses afterwards hurled contemptuously out to an immense distance from “the caverns of death.”’’†

“Pooh!” said the king.

“‘Continuing our progress, we perceived a district abounding with vegetables that grew not upon any soil, but in the air.‡ There were others that sprang from the substance of other vegetables;§ others that derived their sustenance from the bodies of living animals;|| and then, again, there were others that

*The region of the Niger. See Simmond’s “*Colonial Magazine*. ”

†The *Myrmecleon*—lion-ant. The term “monster” is equally applicable to small abnormal things and to great, while such epithets as “vast” are merely comparative. The cavern of the myrmecleon is *vast* in comparison with the hole of the common red ant. A grain of silex is also a “rock.”

‡The *Epidendron*, *Flos Aeris*, of the family of the *Orchidæ*, grows with merely the surface of its roots attached to a tree or other object, from which it derives no nutriment—subsisting altogether upon air.

§The *Parasites*, such as the wonderful *Rafflesia Arnaldii*.

||Schouw advocates a class of plants that grow upon living animals—the *Plantæ Epizoæ*. Of this class are some *Fuci* and *Algæ*.

Mr. J. B. Williams, of Salem, Mass., presented the “National Institute” with an insect from New Zealand, with the following description:—“‘*The Holte*,’ a decided caterpillar or worm, is found growing at the root of the *Rata* tree, with a plant growing out of its head. This most peculiar and most extraordinary insect travels up both the *Rata* and *Perriri* trees, and,

glowed all over with intense fire;* others that moved from place to place at pleasure;† and what is still more wonderful, we discovered flowers that lived and breathed and moved their limbs at will, and had, moreover, the detestable passion of mankind for enslaving other creatures, and confining them in horrid and solitary prisons until the fulfilment of appointed tasks.'''‡

"Pshaw!" said the king.

"Quitting this land, we soon arrived at another in which the bees and the birds are mathematicians of such genius and erudition that they give daily instructions in the science of geometry to the wise men of the empire. The king of the place having offered a reward for the solution of two very difficult problems,

entering into the top, eats its way, perforating the trunk of the tree until it reaches the root; it then comes out of the root and dies, or remains dormant, and the plant propagates out of its head; the body remains perfect and entire, of a harder substance than when alive. From this insect the natives make a coloring for tattooing."

* In mines and natural caves we find a species of cryptogamous *fungus* that emits an intense phosphorescence.

† The orchis, scabious and vallisneria.

‡ "The corolla of this flower (*Aristolochia Clematitis*), which is tubular, but terminating upwards in a lingulate limb, is inflated into a globular figure at the base. The tubular part is internally beset with stiff hairs, pointing downwards. The globular part contains the pistil, which consists merely of a germen and stigma, together with the surrounding stamens. But the stamens, being shorter than even the germen, cannot discharge the pollen so as to throw it upon the stigma, as the flower stands always upright till after impregnation. And hence, without some additional and peculiar aid, the pollen must necessarily fall down to the bottom of the flower. Now, the aid that nature furnished in this case is that of the *Tipula Pennicornis*, a small insect, which, entering the tube of the corolla in quest of honey, descends to the bottom, and rummages about till it becomes quite covered with pollen; but not being able to force its way out again, owing to the downward position of the hairs, which converge to a point like the wires of a mouse-trap, and being somewhat impatient of its confinement, it brushes backwards, and trying every corner, till, after repeatedly traversing the stigma, it covers it with pollen sufficient for its impregnation, in consequence of which the flower soon begins to droop, and the hairs to shrink to the side of the tube, effecting an easy passage for the escape of the insect."—Rev. P. Keith, "System of Physiological Botany."

they were solved upon the spot—the one by the bees and the other by the birds; but the king keeping their solutions a secret, it was only after the most profound researches and labor, and a writing of an infinity of big books during a long series of years, that the men-mathematicians at length arrived at the identical solutions which had been given upon the spot by the bees and by the birds.’’*

“O my!” said the king.

“‘We had scarcely lost sight of this empire when we found ourselves close upon another, from whose shores there flew over our heads a flock of fowls a mile in breadth, and two hundred and forty miles long—so that, although they flew a mile during every minute, it required no less than four hours for the whole flock to pass over us—in which there were several millions of millions of fowls.’’†

“O fy!” said the king.

* The bees—ever since bees were—have been constructing their cells with just such sides, in just such number, and at just such inclinations, as it has been demonstrated (in a problem involving the profoundest mathematical principles) are the very sides, in the very number, and at the very angles, which will afford the creatures the most room that is compatible with the greatest stability of structure.

During the latter part of the last century, the question arose among mathematicians—“to determine the best form that can be given to the sails of a windmill, according to their varying distances from the revolving vanes, and likewise from the centres of the revolution.” This is an excessively complex problem; for it is, in other words, to find the best possible position at an infinity of varied distances, and at an infinity of points on the arm. There were a thousand futile attempts to answer the query on the part of the most illustrious mathematicians; and when, at length, an undeniably solution was discovered, men found that the wings of a bird had given it with absolute precision ever since the first bird had traversed the air.

† He observed a flock of pigeons passing betwixt Frankfort and the Indiana territory one mile at least in breadth; it took up four hours in passing, which, at the rate of one mile per minute, gives a length of 240 miles; and supposing three pigeons to each square yard, gives 2,230,272,000 pigeons.—“*Travels in Canada and the United States,*” by Lieut. F. Hall.

“ ‘No sooner had we got rid of these birds, which occasioned us great annoyance, than we were terrified by the appearance of a fowl of another kind, and infinitely larger than even the roes which I met in my former voyages; for it was bigger than the biggest of the domes upon your seraglio, O most munificent of caliphs. This terrible fowl had no head that we could perceive, but was fashioned entirely of belly, which was of a prodigious fatness and roundness, of a soft-looking substance, smooth, shining, and striped with various colors. In its talons the monster was bearing away to its eyrie in the heavens a house from which it had knocked off the roof, and in the interior of which we distinctly saw human beings, who, beyond doubt, were in a state of frightful despair at the horrible fate which awaited them. We shouted with all our might in the hope of frightening the bird into letting go of its prey, but it merely gave a snort or puff as if of rage, and then let fall upon our heads a heavy sack which proved to be filled with sand !’ ”

“Stuff!” said the king.

“ It was just after this adventure that we encountered a continent of immense extent and of prodigious solidity, but which, nevertheless, was supported entirely upon the back of a sky-blue cow that had no fewer than four hundred horns !’ ”*

“ That, now, I believe,” said the king, “ because I have read something of the kind before in a book.”

“ We passed immediately beneath this continent (swimming in between the legs of the eow), and after some hours found ourselves in a wonderful country indeed, which, I was informed by the man-animal,

*The earth is upheld by a cow of a blue color, having horns 400 in number.”—*Sale's Koran.*

was his own native land, inhabited by things of his own species. This elevated the man-animal very much in my esteem, and in fact I now began to feel ashamed of the contemptuous familiarity with which I had treated him ; for I found that the man-animals in general were a nation of the most powerful magicians who lived with worms in their brains,* which no doubt served to stimulate them by their painful writhings and wrigglings to the most miraculous efforts of imagination.'"

"Nonsense!" said the king.

"Among the magicians were domesticated several animals of very singular kinds ; for example, there was a huge horse whose bones were iron and whose blood was boiling water. In place of corn, he had black stones for his usual food ; and yet, in spite of so hard a diet, he was so strong and swift that he would drag a load more weighty than the grandest temple in this city, at a rate surpassing that of the flight of most birds.'"[†]

"Twaddle!" said the king.

"I saw also among these people a hen without feathers, but bigger than a camel ; instead of flesh and bone she had iron and brick ; her blood, like that of the horse (to whom in fact she was nearly related), was boiling water, and like him she ate nothing but wood or black stones. This hen brought forth very frequently a hundred chickens in the day, and after birth they took up their residence for several weeks within the stomach of their mother.'"[‡]

* "The *Entozoa* or intestinal worms have repeatedly been observed in the muscles and in the cerebral substance of men."—See *Wyatt's Physiology*, p. 143.

† On the Great Western Railway, between London and Exeter, a speed of seventy-one miles per hour has been attained. A train weighing ninety tons was whirled from Paddington to Didcot (fifty-three miles), in fifty-one minutes.

‡ The *Eccolabeion*.

“ Fal lal !” said the king.

“ ‘One of this nation of mighty conjurors created a man out of brass and wood and leather, and endowed him with such ingenuity that he would have beaten at chess all the race of mankind with the exception of the great Caliph Haroun Alrasched.* Another of these magi constructed (of like material) a creature that put to shame even the genius of him who made it; for so great were its reasoning powers that in a second it performed calculations of so vast an extent that they would have required the united labor of fifty thousand fleshy men for a year.† But a still more wonderful conjuror fashioned for himself a mighty thing that was neither man nor beast, but which had brains of lead intermixed with a black matter like pitch, and fingers that it employed with such incredible speed and dexterity that it would have had no trouble in writing out twenty thousand copies of the Koran in an hour; and this with so exquisite a precision, that in all the copies there should not be found one to vary from another by the breadth of the finest hair. This thing was of prodigious strength, so that it erected or overthrew the mightiest empires at a breath; but its powers were exercised equally for evil and for good.’ ”

“ Ridiculous !” said the king.

“ ‘ Among this nation of neeromancers there was also one who had in his veins the blood of the salamanders; for he made no scruple of sitting down to smoke his ehiboue in a red-hot oven until his dinner was thoroughly roasted upon its floor.‡ Another had the faculty of converting the common metals into gold

* Maelzel’s Automaton Chess-player.

† Babbage’s Calculating Machine.

‡ Chabert, and since him a hundred others.

without even looking at them during the process.* Another had such a delicacy of touch that he made a wire so fine as to be invisible.† Another had such quickness of perception that he counted all the separate motions of an elastic body while it was springing backwards and forwards at the rate of nine hundred millions of times in a second.' "‡

"Absurd!" said the king.

"Another of these magicians, by means of a fluid that nobody ever yet saw, could make the corpses of his friends brandish their arms, kick out their legs, fight, or even get up and dance at his will.§ Another had cultivated his voice to so great an extent that he could have made himself heard from one end of the earth to the other.|| Another had so long an arm that he could sit down in Damascus and indite a letter at Bagdad, or indeed at any distance whatsoever.¶ Another commanded the lightning to come down to him out of the heavens, and it came at his call, and served him for a plaything when it came. Another took two loud sounds and out of them made a silence. Another constructed a deep darkness out of two brilliant lights.** Another made ice in a red-hot

* The Electrotype.

† Wollaston made of platinum for the field of view in a telescope a wire one eighteen-thousandth part of an inch in thickness. It could be seen only by means of the microscope.

‡ Newton demonstrated that the retina, beneath the influence of the violet ray of the spectrum, vibrated 900,000,000 of times in a second.

§ The Voltaic pile.

|| The Electric Telegraph transmits intelligence instantaneously—at least so far as regards any distance upon the earth.

¶ The Electric Telegraph Printing Apparatus.

** Common experiments in Natural Philosophy. If two red rays from two luminous points be admitted into a dark chamber so as to fall on a white surface, and differ in their length by .00000258 of an inch, their intensity is doubled. So also, if the difference in length be any whole-number multiple of that fraction. A multiple by $2\frac{1}{4}$, $3\frac{1}{4}$, etc., gives an

furnace.* Another directed the sun to paint his portrait, and the sun did.† Another took this luminary with the moon and the planets, and having first weighed them with scrupulous accuracy, probed into their depths and found out the solidity of the substance of which they are made. But the whole nation is indeed of so surprising a necromantic ability that not even their infants nor their commonest cats and dogs have any difficulty in seeing objects that do not exist at all, or that for twenty millions of years before the birth of the nation itself had been blotted out from the face of creation.' "‡

"Preposterous!" said the king.

"The wives and daughters of these incomparably

intensity equal to one ray only; but a multiple by $2\frac{1}{2}$, $3\frac{1}{2}$, etc., gives the result of total darkness. In violet rays similar effects arise when the difference in length is .00000167 of an inch; and with all other rays the results are the same—the difference varying with a uniform increase from the violet to the red.

Analogous experiments in respect to sound produce analogous results.

* Place a platina crucible over a spirit-lamp and keep it at a red heat; pour in some sulphuric acid, which though the most volatile of bodies at a common temperature, will be found to become completely fixed, in a hot crucible, and not a drop evaporates—being surrounded by an atmosphere of its own, it does not, in fact, touch the sides. A few drops of water are now introduced, when the acid immediately coming in contact with the heated sides of the crucible, flies off in sulphurous acid vapor, and so rapid is its progress that the caloric of the water passes off with it, which falls a lump of ice to the bottom; by taking advantage of the moment before it is allowed to re-melt, it may be turned out a lump of ice from a red-hot vessel.

† The Daguerreotype.

‡ Although light travels 167,000 miles in a second, the distance of 61 Cygni (the only star whose distance is ascertained) is so inconceivably great that its rays would require more than ten years to reach the earth. For stars beyond this, 20—or even 1000 years—would be a moderate estimate. Thus, if they had been annihilated 20 or 1000 years ago we might still see them to-day by the light which started from their surfaces 20 or 1000 years in the past time. That many which we see daily are really extinct is not impossible—not even improbable.

The elder Herschel maintains that the light of the faintest nebulae seen through his great telescope must have taken 3,000,000 years in reaching the earth. Some made visible by Lord Rosse's instrument must then have required at least 20,000,000.

great and wise magi,'" continued Scheherazade, without being in any manner disturbed by these frequent and most ungentlemanly interruptions on the part of her husband—"‘the wives and daughters of these eminent conjurors are everything that is accomplished and refined, and would be everything that is interesting and beautiful but for an unhappy fatality that besets them, and from which not even the miraculous powers of their husbands and fathers has hitherto been adequate to save. Some fatalities come in certain shapes and some in others, but this of which I speak has come in the shape of a crotchet.’"

"A what?" said the king.

"‘A crotchet,’" said Scheherazade. "‘One of the evil genii who are perpetually upon the watch to inflict ill has put it into the heads of these accomplished ladies that the thing which we describe as personal beauty consists altogether in the protuberance of the region which lies not very far below the small of the back. Perfection of loveliness they say is in the direct ratio of the extent of this hump. Having been long possessed of this idea, and bolsters being cheap in that country, the days have long gone by since it was possible to distinguish a woman from a dromedary’"—

"Stop!" said the king—"I can't stand that, and I won't. You have already given me a dreadful headache with your lies. The day, too, I perceive, is beginning to break. How long have we been married? — my conscience is getting to be troublesome again. And then that dromedary touch—do you take me for a fool? Upon the whole you might as well get up and be throttled."

These words, as I learn from the "Isitsoörnot," both

grieved and astonished Scheherazade ; but as she knew the king to be a man of scrupulous integrity, and quite unlikely to forfeit his word, she submitted to her fate with a good grace. She derived, however, great consolation (during the tightening of the bow-string) from the reflection that much of the history remained still untold, and that the petulance of her brute of a husband had reaped for him a most righteous reward in depriving him of many inconceivable adventures.

WHY THE LITTLE FRENCHMAN WEARS HIS HAND IN A SLING.

It's on my wisiting cards sure enough (and it's them that's all o' pink satin paper) that inny gintleman that plases may behould the intheristhin words, "Sir Pathriek O'Grandison, Barronitt, 39 Southampton Row, Russell Square, Parrish o' Bloomsbury." And shud ye be wantin to diskiver who is the pink of purliteness quite, and the laider of the hot tun in the houl city o' Lonon —why it's jist mesilf. And fait that same is no wonder at all at all (so be plased to stop curlin your nose), for every inch o' the six wakes that I've been a gintleman, and left aff wid the bog-throthing to take up wid the Barronissy, it's Pathrick that's been living like a houly imperor, an gitting the iddication and the graces. Och ! and wouldn't it be a blessed thing for your sperrits if ye eud lay your two peepers jist upon Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, when he is all riddy drissed for the hopperer, or stipping into the Brisky for the drive into the Hyde Park. But it's the illigant big figgur that I ave, for the rason o' which all the ladies fall in love wid me. Isn't it my own swate silf now that'll missure the six fut, and the three inches more nor that, in me stockings, and that am exeadingly well proportioned all over to match ? And is it rarely more than the three fut and a bit that there is, inny how, of the little ould furrener Frinehman that lives jist over the way, and that's a oggling and a goggling the houl day (and bad luck to him) at the purty widdy Mistress

Tracle that's my own nixt door neighbor (God bliss her), and a most particuller frind and acquaintance? You persave the little spalpeen is summat down in the mouth, and wears his lift hand in a sling; and it's for that same thing, by yur lave, that I'm going to give you the good rason.

The truth of the houl matter is jist simple enough; for the very first day that I cum'd from Connaught, and showd my swate little silf in the strait to the widdy, who was looking through the windy, it was a gone case althegither wid the heart o' the purty Misthress Tracle. I persaved it, ye see, all at once, and no mistake, and that's God's thruth. First of all it was up with the windy in a jiffy, and thin she threw open her two peepers to the itmost, and thin it was a little gould spy-glass that she clapped tight to one o' them, and devil may burn me if it didn't spake to me as plain as a peeper cud spake, and says it, through the spy-glass, "Och! the tip o' the mornin to ye, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, mavourneen; and it's a nate gintleman that ye are, sure enough, and it's mesilf and me forten jist that'll be at yur sarvice, dear, inny time o' day at all at all for the asking." And it's not mesilf ye wad have to be bate in the purliteness; so I made her a bow that wud ha broken yur heart althegither to behould, and thin I pulled aff me hat with a flourish, and thin I winked at her hard wid both eyes, as much as to say, "Thrue for you, yer a swate little crature, Mrs. Tracle, me darlint, and I wish I may be drownthed dead in a bog, if it's not mesilf, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, that'll make a houl bushel o' love to yur leddyship, in the twinkling o' the eye of a Londonderry purraty."

And it was the nixt mornin, sure, jist as I was making up me mind whither it wouldn't be the purlite thing

to sind a bit o' writin to the widdy by way of a love-litter, when up cum'd the delivery servant wid an illigant card, and he tould me that the name on it (for I niver cud rade the copper-plate printin on account of being lift-handed) was all about Mounseer, the Count, A Goose, Look-aisy, Maiter-di-dauns, and that the houl of the divilish lingo was the spalpeeny long name of the little ould furrener Frinchman as lived over the way.

And jist wid that in cum'd the little villain himself, and thin he made me a broth of a bow, and thin he said he had ounly taken the liberty of doing me the honor of the giving me a call, and thin he went on to palaver at a great rate, and divil the bit did I comprehind what he wud be afther the tilling me at all at all, excepting and saving that he said "pully wou, woolly wou," and tould me, among a bushel o' lies, bad luck to him, that he was mad for the love o' my widdy Misthress Tracle, and that my widdy Mrs. Tracle had a puncheon for *him*.

At the hearin of this, ye may swear, though, I was as mad as a grasshopper, but I remimbered that I was Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, and that it wasn't althegither gentaal to lit the anger git the upper hand o' the purliteness, so I made light o' the matter and kipt dark, and got quite sociable wid the little chap, and afther a while what did he do but ask me to go wid him to the widdy's, saying he wud give me the feshionable inthroduction to her leddyship.

"Is it there ye are?" said I thin to mesilf, "and it's thtrue for you, Pathrick, that ye're the fortunnittest mortal in life. We'll soon see now whither it's your swate silf, or whither it's little Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns, that Misthress Tracle is head and ears in the love wid."

Wid that we wint aff to the widdy's next door, and ye may well say it was an illigant place; so it was.

There was a carpet all over the floor, and in one corner there was a forty-pinny and a jews-harp and the divil knows what ilse, and in another corner was a sofy, the beautifullest thing in all natur, and sitting on the sofy, sure enough, there was the swate little angel, Misthress Tracle.

"The tip o' the morning to ye," says I, "Mrs. Tracle," and thin I made sich an illegant obaysance that it wad ha quite althegither bewildered the brain o' ye.

"Wully woo, pully woo, plump in the mud," says the little furrenner Frinchman, "and sure, Mrs. Tracle," says he, that he did, "isn't this gintleman here jist his reverence Sir Patrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, and isn't he althegither and entirely the most particular frind and acquaintance that I have in the houl world?"

And wid that the widdy she gits up from the sofy, and makes the swatest curtchy nor ever was seen; and thin down she sits like an angel; and thin, by the powers, it was that little spalpeen Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns that plumped hisself right down by the right side of her. Och hon! I ixpected the two eyes o' me wud ha' cum'd out of my head on the spot, I was so desperate mad! However, "Bait who!" says I, after a while. "Is it there ye are, Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns?" and so down I plumped on the lift side of her leddyship, to be aven wid the villain. Botheration! it wud ha' done your heart good to persave the illigant double wink that I gived her jist thin right in the face wid both eyes.

But the little ould Frinchman he niver beginned to suspect me at all at all, and desperate hard it was he made the love to her leddyship. "Wouly wou," say he, "Pully wou," says he, "Plump in the mud," says he.

"That's all to no use, Mounseer Frog, mavourneen," thinks I; and I talked as hard and as fast as I could all

the while, and throth it was mesilf jist that divarted her leddyship compleately and intirely, by rason of the illigant conversation that I kept up wid her all about the dear bogs of Connaught. And by and by she gived me such a swate smile, from one end of her mouth to the ither, that it made me as bould as a pig, and I jist took hould of the ind of her little finger in the most dilikittest manner in natur, looking at her all the while out o' the whites of my eyes.

And then ounly persave the cuteness of the swate angel, for no sooner did she obsarve that she was afther the squazing of her flipper, than she up wid it in a jiffy, and put it away behind her baek, just as much as to say, "Now thin, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, there's a bitter chancee for ye, mavourneen, for it's not altogether the gentaal thing to be afther the squazing of my flipper right full in the sight of that little furrener Frinchman, Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns."

Wid that I giv'd her a big wink jist to say, "Lit Sir Pathrick alone for the likes o' them thricks," and thin I wint aisy to work, and you'd have died wid the diversion to behold how eliverly I slipped my right arm betwane the back o' the sofy, and the baek of her leddyship, and there, sure enough, I found a swate little flipper all a waiting to say, "The tip o' the morning to ye, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt." And wasn't it mesilf sure, that jist giv'd it the laste little bit of a squaze in the world, all in the way of a commincement, and not to be too rough wid her leddyship? and oeh, botheration, wasn't it the gentaalest and dillikittest of all the little squazes that I got in return? "Blood and thunder, Sir Pathrick, mavourneen," thinks I to myself, "faid its jist the mother's son of you, and nobody else at all at all, that's the handsomest and the fortunittest

young bog-throtter that ever cum'd out of Connaught! and wid that I gived the flipper a big squaze, and a big squaze it was, by the powers, that her leddyship giv'd to me back. But it would ha' split the seven sides of you wid the laffin to behould jist then, all at once, the consated behavior of Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns. The likes o' sich a jabbering, and a smirking, and a parlywouing as he begin'd wid her leddyship, niver was known before upon arth; and devil may burn me if it wasn't me own very two peepers that cotch'd him tipping her the wink out of one eye. Och hon! if it wasn't mesilf thin that was mad as a Kilkenny cat I shud like to be tould who it was!

"Let me infarm you, Mounseer Maiter-di-dauns," said I, as purlite as iver ye seed, "that its not the gintaal thing at all at all, and not for the likes o' you inny how, to be afther the oggling and a goggling at her leddyship in that fashion," and jist wid that such another squaze as it was I giv'd her flipper, all as much as to say, "Isn't it Sir Pathrick now, my jewel, that'll be able to the protecting o' you, my darlint?" and then there cum'd another squaze back, all by way of the answer. "Thru for you, Sir Patrick," it said as plain as iver a squaze said in the world, "Thru for you, Sir Pathrick, mavourneen, and its a proper nate gentleman ye are—that's God's truth," and wid that she opened her two beautipeepers till I belayed they wud ha' cum'd out of her hid althegether and intirely, and she looked first as mad as a cat at Mounseer Frog, and thin as smiling as all out o' doors at mesilf.

"Thin," says he, the villain, "Och hon! and a woully wou, pully wou," and then wid that he shoved up his two shoulders till the devil the bit of his hid was to be diskivered, and then he let down the two corners of his

purraty-trap, and thin not a haporth more of the satisfaction could I git out o' the spalpeen.

Belave me, my jewel, it was Sir Pathrick that was unrasonable mad thin, and the more by token that the Frinchman kept an wid his winking at the widdye; and the widdye she kipt an wid the squazing of my flipper, as much as to say, "At him again, Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, mayourneen;" so I just ripped out wid a big oath, and says I:—

"Ye little spalpeeny frog of a bog-throtting son of a bloody-noun!"—and jist thin what d'ye think it was that her leddyship did? Troth she jumped up from the sofy as if she was bit, and made off through the door, while I turned my head 'round afther her in a complete bewilderment and botheration, and followed her wid me two peepers. You persave I had a rason of my own for knowing that she couldn't git down the stairs althegither and entirely; for I knew very well that I had hould of her hand, for devil the bit had I iver let it go. And says I:

"Isn't it the laste little bit of a mistake in the world that ye've been afther the making, yer leddyship? Come back now, that's a darlint, and I'll give ye yur flipper." But aff she wint down the stairs like a shot, and then I turned round to the little Frinch furrener. Och hon! if it wasn't his spalpeeny little paw that I had hould of in my own—why thin—thin it wasn't—that's all.

And maybe it wasn't mesilf that jist died then outright wid the laffin, to behould the little chap when he found out that it wasn't the widdye at all at all that he had hould of all the time, but only Sir Pathrick O'Grandison. The ould devil himself niver behild sich a long face as he pet an! As for Sir Pathrick O'Grandison, Barronitt, it wasn't for the likes of his riverence to be afther the mindin of a thrifle of a mistake. Ye may

jist say, though (for its God's thruth), that afore I lift hould of the flipper of the spalpeen (which was not till afther her leddyship's futmen had kicked us both down the stairs), I gived it such a nice little broth of a squaze as made it all up into raspberry jam.

"Wouly wou," says he, "pully wou," says he—
"Cot tam!"

And that's jist the thruth of the rason why he wears his left hand in a sling.

BON-BON.

Quand un bon vin meuble mon estomac
Je suis plus savant que Balzac—
Plus sage que Pibrac ;
Mon bras seul faisant l'attaque
De la nation Cossaque,
La mettroit au sac :
De Charon je passerois le lac
En dormant dans son bac ;
J'irois au fier Eac,
Sans que mon cœur fit tic ni tae,
Presenter du tabac.

—FRENCH VAUDEVILLE.

That Pierre Bon-Bon was a *restaurateur* of uncommon qualifications, no man who, during the reign of —, frequented the little Café in the *cul-de-sac* Lefébvre at Rouen, will, I imagine, feel himself at liberty to dispute. That Pierre Bon-Bon was, in an equal degree, skilled in the philosophy of that period is, I presume, still more especially undeniable. His *pâtés à la foie* were beyond doubt immaculate; but what pen can do justice to his essays *sur la Nature*—his thoughts *sur l'Ame*—his observations *sur l'Esprit*? If his *omelettes*—if his *fricandeaux* were inestimable, what *littérateur* of that day would not have given twice as much for an “*Idée de Bon-Bon*,” as for all the trash of all the “*Idées*” of all the rest of the *savants*? Bon-Bon had ransacked libraries which no other man had ransacked—had read more than any other would have entertained a notion of reading—had understood more than any other would have conceived the possibility of understanding; and

although, while he flourished, there were not wanting some authors at Rouen to assert "that his *dicta* evinced neither the purity of the Academy nor the depth of the Lyceum"—although, mark me, his doctrines were by no means very generally comprehended, still it did not follow that they were difficult of comprehension. It was, I think, on account of their self-evidency that many persons were led to consider them abstruse. It is to Bon-Bon—but let this go no farther—it is to Bon-Bon that Kant himself is mainly indebted for his metaphysics. The former was indeed not a Platonist, nor strictly speaking an Aristotelian—nor did he, like the modern Leibnitz, waste those precious hours which might be employed in the invention of a *fricasée*, or, *facili gradu*, the analysis of a sensation, in frivolous attempts at reconciling the obstinate oils and waters of ethical discussion. Not at all. Bon-Bon was Ionic—Bon-Bon was equally Italic. He reasoned *a priori*—he reasoned also *a posteriori*. His ideas were innate—or otherwise. He believed in George of Trebizond—he believed in Bossarion. Bon-Bon was emphatically a—Bon-Bonist.

I have spoken of the philosopher in his capacity of *restaurateur*. I would not, however, have any friend of mine imagine that, in fulfilling his hereditary duties in that line, our hero wanted a proper estimation of their dignity and importance. Far from it. It was impossible to say in which branch of his profession he took the greater pride. In his opinion the powers of the intellect held intimate connection with the capabilities of the stomach. I am not sure, indeed, that he greatly disagreed with the Chinese, who hold that the soul lies in the abdomen. The Greeks, at all events, were right, he thought, who employed the same word for

the mind and the diaphragm. *By this I do not mean to insinuate a charge of gluttony, or indeed any other serious charge, to the prejudice of the metaphysician. If Pierre Bon-Bon had his failings—and what great man has not a thousand?—If Pierre Bon-Bon, I say, had his failings, they were failings of very little importance—faults indeed which, in other tempers, have often been looked upon rather in the light of virtues. As regards one of these foibles, I should not even have mentioned it in this history but for the remarkable prominency—the extreme *alto riliero*—in which it jutted out from the plane of his general disposition.—He could never let slip an opportunity of making a bargain.

Not that he was avaricious—no. It was by no means necessary to the satisfaction of the philosopher that the bargain should be to his own proper advantage. Provided a trade could be effected—a trade of any kind, upon any terms, or under any circumstances—a triumphant smile was seen for many days thereafter to enlighten his countenance, and a knowing wink of the eye to give evidence of his sagacity.

At any epoch it would not be very wonderful if a humor so peculiar as the one I have just mentioned should elicit attention and remark. At the epoch of our narrative, had this peculiarity *not* attracted observation, there would have been room for wonder indeed. It was soon reported that, upon all occasions of the kind, the smile of Bon-Bon was wont to differ widely from the downright grin with which he would laugh at his own jokes or welcome an acquaintance. Hints were thrown out of an exciting nature, stories were told of perilous bargains made in a hurry and repented of at leisure; and instances were adduced of unaccountable capacities,

* $\phi\rho\epsilon\nu\epsilon\varsigma$

vague longings, and unnatural inclinations implanted by the author of all evil for wise purposes of his own.

The philosopher had other weaknesses, but they are scarcely worthy our serious examination. For example, there are few men of extraordinary profundity who are found wanting in an inclination for the bottle. Whether this inclination be an exciting cause or rather a valid proof of such profundity, it is a nice thing to say. Bon-Bon, as far as I can learn, did not think the subject adapted to minute investigation—nor do I. Yet in the indulgence of a propensity so truly classical, it is not to be supposed that the *restaurateur* would lose sight of that intuitive discrimination which was wont to characterize, at one and the same time, his *essais* and his *omelettes*. In his seclusions the Vin de Bourgogne had its allotted hour, and there were appropriate moments for the Côtes du Rhone. With him Sauterne was to Medoc what Catullus was to Homer. He would sport with a syllogism in sipping St. Peray, but unravel an argument over Clos Vougeot, and upset a theory in a torrent of Chambertin. Well had it been if the same quick sense of propriety had attended him in the peddling propensity to which I have formerly alluded—but this was by no means the case. Indeed, to say the truth, *that* trait of mind in the philosophic Bon-Bon did begin at length to assume a character of strange intensity and mysticism, and appeared deeply tinctured with the *diablerie* of his favorite German studies.

To enter the little *Café* in the *cul-de-sac* Lefebvre was, at the period of our tale, to enter the *sanctum* of a man of genius. Bon-Bon was a man of genius. There was not a *sous-cuisinier* in Rouen who could not have told you that Bon-Bon was a man of genius. His very cat knew it, and forbore to whisk her tail in the presence

of the man of genius. His large water-dog was acquainted with the fact, and upon the approach of his master betrayed his sense of inferiority by a sanctity of deportment, a debasement of the ears, and a dropping of the lower jaw not altogether unworthy of a dog. It is, however, true that much of this habitual respect might have been attributed to the personal appearance of the metaphysician. A distinguished exterior will, I am constrained to say, have its weight even with a beast; and I am willing to allow much in the outward man of the *restaurateur* calculated to impress the imagination of the quadruped. There is a peculiar majesty about the atmosphere of the little great—if I may be permitted so equivocal an expression—which mere physical bulk alone will be found at all times inefficient in creating. If, however, Bon-Bon was barely three feet in height, and if his head was diminutively small, still it was impossible to behold the rotundity of his stomach without a sense of magnificence nearly bordering upon the sublime. In its size both dogs and men must have seen a type of his acquirements—in its immensity a fitting habitation for his immortal soul.

I might here, if it so pleased me, dilate upon the matter of habiliment, and other mere circumstances of the external metaphysician. I might hint that the hair of our hero was worn short, combed smoothly over his forehead, and surmounted by a conical-shaped white flannel cap and tassels—that his pea-green jerkin was not after the fashion of those worn by the common class of *restaurateurs* at that day—that the sleeves were something fuller than the reigning costume permitted—that the cuffs were turned up, not, as usual in that barbarous period, with cloth of the same quality and color as the garment, but faced in a more fanciful manner with the parti-

colored velvet of Genoa—that his slippers were of a bright purple curiously filagreed, and might have been manufactured in Japan but for the exquisite pointing of the toes and the brilliant tints of the binding and embroidery—that his breeches were of the yellow satin-like material called *aimable*—that his sky-blue cloak, resembling in form a dressing-wrapper, and richly bestudded all over with crimson devices, floated cavalierly upon his shoulders like a mist of the morning—and that his *tout ensemble* gave rise to the remarkable words of Benevenuta, the Improvisatrice of Florence, “that it was difficult to say whether Pierre Bon-Bon was indeed a bird of Paradise, or the rather a very Paradise of perfection.” I might, I say, expatiate upon all these points if I pleased; but I forbear: merely personal details may be left to historical novelists; they are beneath the moral dignity of matter-of-fact.

I have said that “to enter the *Café* in the *cul-de-sac* Lefebvre was to enter the *sanctum* of a man of genius”—but then it was only the man of genius who could duly estimate the merits of the *sanctum*. A sign, consisting of a vast folio, swung before the entrance. On one side of the volume was painted a bottle; on the reverse a *pâté*. On the back were visible in large letters *Œuvres de Bon-Bon*. Thus was delicately shadowed forth the twofold occupation of the proprietor.

Upon stepping over the threshold, the whole interior of the building presented itself to view. A long, low-pitched room, of antique construction, was indeed all the accommodation afforded by the *Café*. In a corner of the apartment stood the bed of the metaphysician. An array of curtains, together with a canopy à la Greque, gave it an air at once classic and comfortable. In the corner diagonally opposite appeared, in direct family

communion, the properties of the kitchen and the *bibliothèque*. A dish of polemics stood peacefully upon the dresser. Here lay an oven-ful of the latest ethics, there a kettle of duodecimo *mélanges*. Volumes of German morality were hand-and-glove with the gridiron—a toasting-fork might be discovered by the side of Eusebius—Plato reclined at his ease in the frying-pan—and contemporary manuscripts were filed away upon the spit.

In other respects the *Café de Bon-Bon* might be said to differ little from the usual *restaurants* of the period. A large fireplace yawned opposite the door. On the right of the fireplace an open cupboard displayed a formidable array of labeled bottles.

It was here, about twelve o'clock one night during the severe winter of —, that Pierre Bon-Bon, after having listened for some time to the comments of his neighbors upon his singular propensity—that Pierre Bon-Bon, I say, having turned them all out of his house, locked the door upon them with an oath, and betook himself in no very pacific mood to the comforts of a leather-bottomed arm-chair and a fire of blazing faggots.

It was one of those terrific nights which are only met with once or twice during a century. It snowed fiercely, and the house tottered to its centre with the floods of wind that, rushing through the crannies of the wall, and pouring impetuously down the chimney, shook awfully the curtains of the philosopher's bed, and disorganized the economy of the *pâté* pans and papers. The huge folio sign that swung without, exposed to the fury of the tempest, creaked ominously, and gave out a moaning sound from its stanchions of solid oak.

It was in no placid temper, I say, that the metaphysician drew up his chair to its customary station by the hearth. Many circumstances of a perplexing

nature had occurred during the day to disturb the serenity of his meditations. In attempting *des œufs à la Princesse* he had unfortunately perpetrated an *omelette à la Reine*, the discovery of a principle in ethics had been frustrated by the overturning of a stew; and last, not least, he had been thwarted in one of those admirable bargains which he at all times took such especial delight in bringing to a successful termination. But in the chafing of his mind at these unaccountable vicissitudes there did not fail to be mingled some degree of that nervous anxiety which the fury of a boisterous night is so well calculated to produce. Whistling to his more immediate vicinity the large black water-dog we have spoken of before and settling himself uneasily in his chair, he could not help casting a wary and unquiet eye towards those distant recesses of the apartment whose inexorable shadows not even the red firelight itself could more than partially succeed in overcoming. Having completed a scrutiny whose exact purpose was perhaps unintelligible to himself, he drew close to his seat a small table covered with books and papers, and soon became absorbed in the task of re-touching a voluminous manuscript intended for publication on the morrow.

He had been thus occupied for some minutes, when “I am in no hurry, Monsieur Bon-Bon,” suddenly whispered a whining voice in the apartment.

“The devil!” ejaculated our hero, starting to his feet, overturning the table at his side, and staring around him in astonishment.

“Very true,” calmly replied the voice.

“Very true!—what is very true?—how came you here?” vociferated the metaphysician, as his eye fell upon something which lay stretched at full-length upon the bed.

"I was saying," said the intruder, without attending to the interrogatories, "I was saying that I am not at all pushed for time—that the business upon which I took the liberty of calling is of no pressing importance—in short, that I can very well wait until you have finished your Exposition."

"My Exposition!—there now!—how do *you* know?—how came *you* to understand that I was writing an Exposition—good God!"

"Hush!" replied the figure, in a shrill undertone; and, arising quickly from the bed, he made a single step towards our hero, while an iron lamp that depended overhead swung convulsively back from his approach.

The philosopher's amazement did not prevent a narrow scrutiny of the stranger's dress and appearance. The outlines of his figure, exceedingly lean, but much above the common height, were rendered minutely distinct by means of a faded suit of black cloth which fitted tight to the skin, but was otherwise cut very much in the style of a century ago. These garments had evidently been intended for a much shorter person than their present owner. His ankles and wrists were left naked for several inches. In his shoes, however, a pair of very brilliant buckles gave the lie to the extreme poverty implied by the other portions of his dress. His head was bare, and entirely bald, with the exception of the hinder-part, from which depended a *queue* of considerable length. A pair of green spectacles, with side glasses, protected his eyes from the influence of the light, and at the same time prevented our hero from ascertaining either their color or their conformation. About the entire person there was no evidence of a shirt; but a white cravat, of filthy appearance, was tied with extreme precision around the throat, and the ends

hanging down formally side by side, gave (although I dare say unintentionally) the idea of an ecclesiastic. Indeed, many other points both in his appearance and demeanor might have very well sustained a conception of that nature. Over his left ear he carried, after the fashion of a modern clerk, an instrument resembling the *stylus* of the ancients. In a breast-pocket of his coat appeared conspicuously a small black volume fastened with clasps of steel. This book, whether accidentally or not, was so turned outwardly from the person as to discover the words "*Rituel catholique*" in white letters upon the back. His entire physiognomy was interestingly saturnine—even cadaverously pale. The forehead was lofty, and deeply furrowed with the ridges of contemplation. The corners of the mouth were drawn down into an expression of the most submissive humility. There was also a clasping of the hands, as he stepped towards our hero—a deep sigh—and altogether a look of such utter sanctity as could not have failed to be unequivocally prepossessing. Every shadow of anger faded from the countenance of the metaphysician, as, having completed a satisfactory survey of his visitor's person, he shook him cordially by the hand, and conducted him to a seat.

There would, however, be a radical error in attributing this instantaneous transition of feeling in the philosopher to any one of those causes which might naturally be supposed to have had an influence. Indeed, Pierre Bon-Bon, from what I have been able to understand of his disposition, was of all men the least likely to be imposed upon by any speciousness of exterior deportment. It was impossible that so accurate an observer of men and things should have failed to discover, upon the moment, the real character of the personage who had thus intruded upon his hospitality. To say no more, the

conformation of his visitor's feet was sufficiently remarkable—he maintained lightly upon his head an inordinately tall hat—there was a tremulous swelling about the hinder part of his breeches—and the vibration of his coat-tail was a palpable fact. Judge, then, with what feelings of satisfaction our hero found himself thrown thus at once into the society of a person for whom he had at all times entertained the most unqualified respect. He was, however, too much of the diplomatist to let escape him any intimation of his suspicions in regard to the true state of affairs. It was not his cue to appear at all conscious of the high honor he thus unexpectedly enjoyed; but, by leading his guest into conversation, to elicit some important ethical ideas, which might, in obtaining a place in his contemplated publication, enlighten the human race, and at the same time immortalize himself—ideas which, I should have added, his visitor's great age, and well known proficiency in the science of morals, might very well have enabled him to afford.

Actuated by these enlightened views, our hero bade the gentleman sit down, while he himself took occasion to throw some faggots upon the fire, and place upon the now re-established table some bottles of *Mousseux*. Having quickly completed these operations, he drew his chair *vis-à-vis* to his companion's, and waited until the latter should open the conversation. But plans, even the most skilfully matured, are often thwarted in the outset of their application—and the *restaurateur* found himself *nonplussed* by the very first words of his visitor's speech.

"I see you know me, Bon-Bon," said he: "ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—hi! hi! hi!—ho! ho! ho!—hu! hu! hu!"—and the devil, dropping at once the sanctity of his demeanor, opened to its fullest extent a

mouth from ear to ear, so as to display a set of jagged and fang-like teeth, and, throwing back his head, laughed long, loudly, wickedly, and uproariously, while the black dog, crouching down upon his haunches, joined lustily in the chorus, and the tabby cat, flying off at a tangent, stood up on end, and shrieked in the farthest corner of the apartment.

Not so the philosopher: he was too much a man of the world either to laugh like the dog, or by shrieks to betray the indecorous trepidation of the cat. It must be confessed he felt a little astonishment to see the white letters which formed the words "*Rituel Catholique*" on the book in his guest's pocket momently changing both their color and their import, and in a few seconds, in place of the original title, the words "*Registre des condamnés*" blaze forth in characters of red. This startling circumstance, when Bon-Bon replied to his visitor's remark, imparted to his manner an air of embarrassment which probably might not otherwise have been observed.

"Why, sir," said the philosopher, "why, sir, to speak sincerely—I believe you are—upon my word—the d—dest—that is to say, I think—I imagine—I *have* some faint—some *very* faint idea—of the remarkable honor"—

"Oh!—ah!—yes!—very well!" interrupted his Majesty; "say no more—I see how it is." And here-upon, taking off his green spectacles, he wiped the glasses carefully with the sleeve of his coat, and deposited them in his pocket.

If Bon-Bon had been astonished at the incident of the book, his amazement was now much increased by the spectacle which here presented itself to view. In raising his eyes, with a strong feeling of curiosity, to

ascertain the color of his guest's, he found them by no means black, as he had anticipated—nor gray, as might have been imagined—nor yet hazel nor blue—nor indeed yellow nor red—nor purple—nor white—nor green—nor any other color in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. In short, Pierre Bon-Bon not only saw plainly that his Majesty had no eyes whatsoever, but could discover no indications of their having existed at any previous period—for the space where eyes should naturally have been was, I am constrained to say, simply a dead level of flesh.

It was not in the nature of the metaphysician to forbear making some inquiry into the source of so strange a phenomenon; and the reply of his Majesty was at once prompt, dignified, and satisfactory.

"Eyes! my dear Bon-Bon—eyes! did you say?—oh!—ah!—I perceive! The ridiculous prints, eh, which are in circulation, have given you a false idea of my personal appearance? Eyes!—true. Eyes, Pierre Bon-Bon, are very well in their proper place—*that*, you would say, is the head?—right—the head of a worm.—To *you* likewise these optics are indispensable—yet I will convince you that my vision is more penetrating than your own. There is a cat I see in the corner—a pretty cat—look at her—observe her well. Now, Bon-Bon, do you behold the thoughts—the thoughts, I say—the ideas—the reflections—which are being engendered in her pericranium? There it is, now—you do not! She is thinking we admire the length of her tail and the profundity of her mind. She has just concluded that I am the most distinguished of ecclesiastics, and that you are the most superficial of metaphysicians. Thus you see I am not altogether blind; but to one of my profession, the

eyes you speak of would be merely an incumbrance, liable at any time to be put out by a toasting-iron or a pitchfork. To you, I allow, these optical affairs are indispensable. Endeavor, Bon-Bon, to use them well; —*my vision is the soul.*”

Hereupon the guest helped himself to the wine upon the table, and pouring out a bumper for Bon-Bon, requested him to drink it without scruple, and make himself perfectly at home.

“A clever book that of yours, Pierre,” resumed his Majesty, tapping our friend knowingly upon the shoulder, as the latter put down his glass after a thorough compliance with his visitor’s injunction. “A clever book that of yours, upon my honor. It’s a work after my own heart. Your arrangement of the matter, I think, however, might be improved, and many of your notions remind me of Aristotle. That philosopher was one of my most intimate acquaintances. I liked him as much for his terrible ill-temper as for his happy knack at making a blunder. There is only one solid truth in all that he has written, and for that I gave him the hint out of pure compassion for his absurdity. I suppose, Pierre Bon-Bon, you very well know to what divine moral truth I am alluding?”

“Cannot say that I”—

“Indeed!—why, it was I who told Aristotle that, by sneezing, men expelled superfluous ideas through the proboscis.”

“Which is—hiccup!—undoubtedly the case,” said the metaphysician, while he poured out for himself another bumper of Mousseux, and offered his snuff-box to the fingers of his visitor.

“There was Plato, too,” continued his Majesty, modestly declining the snuff-box and the compliment

it implied—"there was Plato, too, for whom I at one time felt all the affection of a friend. You knew Plato, Bon-Bon?—ah, no, I beg a thousand pardons. He met me at Athens one day in the Parthenon, and told me he was distressed for an idea. I bade him write down that *ονος εστιν ανδρος*. He said that he would do so, and went home, while I stepped over to the pyramids. But my conscience smote me for having uttered a truth, even to aid a friend, and hastening back to Athens, I arrived behind the philosopher's chair as he was inditing the '*ανδρος*'. Giving the lamma a fillip with my finger, I turned it upside down. So the sentence now reads '*ονος εστιν ανδρος*', and is, you perceive, the fundamental doctrine in his metaphysics."

"Were you ever at Rome?" asked the *restaurateur*, as he finished his second bottle of Mousseux, and drew from the closet a larger supply of Chambertin.

"But once, Monsieur Bon-Bon, but once. There was a time," said the devil, as if reciting some passage from a book—"There was a time when there occurred an anarchy of five years, during which the republic, bereft of all its officers, had no magistracy besides the tribunes of the people, and these were not legally vested with any degree of executive power—at that time, Monsieur Bon-Bon—at that time *only* I was in Rome, and I have no earthly acquaintance, consequently, with any of its philosophy."*

"What do you think of—what do you think of—hiccup!—Epicurus?"

"What do I think of *whom?*" said the devil, in astonishment, "you cannot surely mean to find any

* Ils écrivaient sur la Philosophie (*Cicero, Lucretius, Seneca*), mais c'était la Philosophie grecque.—*Condorcet*.

fault with Epicurus ! What do I think of Epicurus ! Do you mean me, sir ?—I am Epicurus ! I am the same philosopher who wrote each of the three hundred treatises commemorated by Diogenes Laertes."

"That's a lie !" said the metaphysician, for the wine had gotten a little into his head.

"Very well !—very well, sir !—very well, indeed, sir !" said his Majesty, apparently much flattered.

"That's a lie !" repeated the *restaurateur* dogmatically, "that's a—hiccup !—a lie !"

"Well, well, have it your own way !" said the devil specifically ; and Bon-Bon, having beaten his Majesty at an argument, thought it his duty to conclude a second bottle of Chambertin.

"As I was saying," resumed the visitor, "as I was observing a little while ago, there are some very *outré* notions in that book of yours, Monsieur Bon-Bon. What, for instance, do you mean by all that humbug about the soul ? Pray, sir, what *is* the soul ?"

"The—hiccup !—soul," replied the metaphysician, referring to his MS., "is undoubtedly"—

"No, sir !"

"Indubitably"—

"No, sir !"

"Indisputably"—

"No, sir !"

"Evidently"—

"No, sir !"

"Incontrovertibly"—

"No, sir !"

"Hiccup !"—

"No, sir !"

"And beyond all question, a"—

"No, sir, the soul is no such thing !" (Here the

philosopher, looking daggers, took occasion to make an end upon the spot of his third bottle of Chambertin.)

“Then—hiccup!—pray, sir,—what—what is it?”

“That is neither here nor there, Monsieur Bon-Bon,” replied his Majesty musingly. “I have tasted—that is to say, I have known—some very bad souls, and some, too—pretty good ones.” Here he smacked his lips, and, having unconsciously let fall his hand upon the volume in his pocket, was seized with a violent fit of sneezing.

He continued:—

“There was the soul of Cratinus—passable: Aristophanes—racy: Plato—exquisite—not *your* Plato, but Plato the comic poet: your Plato would have turned the stomach of Cerberus—faugh! Then let me see! there were Naevius, and Andronicus, and Plautus, and Terentius. Then there were Lucilius, and Catullus, and Naso, and Quintus Flaccus,—dear Quinty! as I called him when he sang a *Saeculare* for my amusement, while I toasted him, in pure good-humor, on a fork. But they want *flavor*, these Romans. One fat Greek is worth a dozen of them, and besides, will *keep*, which cannot be said of a Quirite.—Let us taste your Sauterne.”

Bon-Bon had by this time made up his mind to the *nil admirari*, and endeavored to hand down the bottles in question. He was, however, conscious of a strange sound in the room like the wagging of a tail. Of this, although extremely indecent in his Majesty, the philosopher took no notice;—simply kicking the dog, and requesting him to be quiet. The visitor continued:

“I found that Horace tasted very much like Aristotle.—You know I am fond of variety. Terentius I could not have told from Menander. Naso, to my astonish-

ment, was Nicander in disguise. Virgilius had a strong twang of Theocritus. Martial put me much in mind of Archilochus—and Titus Livius was positively Polybius, and none other.

“Hiccup!” here replied Bon-Bon, and his Majesty proceeded :

“But if I *have a penchant*, Monsieur Bon-Bon,—if I *have a penchant*, it is for a philosopher. Yet, let me tell you, sir, it is not every dev—I mean it is not every gentleman, who knows how to *choose* a philosopher. Long ones are *not* good ; and the best, if not carefully shelled, are apt to be a little rancid on account of the gall.”

“Shelled ! !”

“I mean, taken out of the carcass.”

“What do you think of a—hiccup!—physician?”

“*Don’t mention them!*—ugh! ugh!” (Here his Majesty retched violently.) “I never tasted but one—that rascal Hippocrates!—smelt of asafotida—ugh! ugh! ugh!—caught a wretched cold washing him in the Styx—and after all he gave me the cholera morbus.”

“The—hiccup!—wretch!” ejaculated Bon-Bon, “the—hiccup!—abortion of a pill-box!”—and the philosopher dropped a tear.

“After all,” continued the visitor, “after all, if a dev—if a gentleman wishes to *live*, he must have more talents than one or two; and with us a fat face is an evidence of diplomacy.”

“How so?”

“Why, we are sometimes exceedingly pushed for provisions. You must know that, in a climate so sultry as mine, it is frequently impossible to keep a spirit alive for more than two or three hours; and after death, unless pickled immediately (and a pickled spirit is *not*

good), they will—smell—you understand, eh? Putrefaction is always to be apprehended when the souls are consigned to us in the usual way."

"Hiccup!—hiccup!—good God! how do you manage?"

Here the iron lamp commenced swinging with redoubled violence, and the devil half started from his seat;—however, with a slight sigh, he recovered his composure, merely saying to our hero, in a low tone, "I tell you what, Pierre Bon-Bon, we *must* have no more swearing."

The host swallowed another bumper, by way of denoting thorough comprehension and acquiescence, and the visitor continued:

"Why, there are *several* ways of managing. The most of us starve: some put up with the pickle; for my part I purchase my spirits *vivente corpore*, in which case I find they keep very well."

"But the body!—hiccup!—the body!!!"

"The body, the body—well, what of the body?—oh! ah! I perceive. Why, sir, the body is not *at all* affected by the transaction. I have made innumerable purchases of the kind in my day and the parties never experienced any inconvenience. There were Cain and Nimrod, and Nero, and Caligula, and Dionysius, and Pisistratus, and—and a thousand others, who never knew what it was to have a soul during the latter part of their lives; yet, sir, these men adorned society. Why isn't there A——, now, whom you know as well as I? Is *he* not in possession of all his faculties, mental and corporeal? Who writes a keener epigram? Who reasons more wittily? Who—but stay! I have his agreement in my pocket-book."

Thus saying, he produced a red letter wallet, and

took from it a number of papers. Upon some of these Bon-Bon caught a glimpse of the letters *Machi—Maza—Robesp*—with the words *Caligula, George, Elizabeth*. His Majesty selected a narrow slip of parchment, and from it read aloud the following words:—

“In consideration of certain mental endowments which it is unnecessary to specify, and in further consideration of one thousand louis d’or, I, being aged one year and one month, do hereby make over to the bearer of this agreement all my right, title, and appurtenance in the shadow called my soul.” (Signed) A——”* (Here his Majesty repeated a name which I do not feel myself justified in indicating more unequivocally.)

“A clever fellow that,” resumed he; “but, like you, Monsieur Bon-Bon, he was mistaken about the soul. The soul a shadow, truly! The soul a shadow! Ha! ha! ha!—he! he! he!—hu! hu! hu! Only think of a fricasséed shadow!”

“Only think—hiccup!—of a fricasséed shadow!” exclaimed our hero, whose faculties were becoming much illuminated by the profundity of his Majesty’s discourse.

“Only think of a—hiccup!—fricasséed shadow! Now, damme!—hiccup!—humph! If *I* would have been such a—hiccup!—nincompoop. *My* soul,—Mr.—humph!”

“Your soul, Monsieur Bon-Bon!”

“Yes, sir—hiccup!—*my* soul is”—

“What, sir?”

“No shadow, damme!”

“Did you mean to say”—

“Yes, sir, *my* soul is—hiccup!—humph!—yes, sir.”

“Did you intend to assert”—

* Quere—Arouet?

"*My soul is—hiccup!*—peculiarly qualified for—hiccup!—a"—

"What, sir?"

"Stew."

"Ha!"

"Soufflée."

"Eh?"

"Fricassée."

"Indeed!"

"Ragout and friandise—and see here, my good fellow! I'll let you have it—hiccup!—a bargain." Here the philosopher slapped his Majesty upon the back.

"Couldn't think of such a thing," said the latter, calmly, at the same time rising from his seat. The metaphysician stared.

"Am supplied at present," said his Majesty.

"Hic-eup!—e-h?" said the philosopher.

"Have no funds on hand."

"What?"

"Besides, very unhandsome in me"—

"Sir!"

"To take advantage of"—

"Hic-eup!"

"Your present disgusting and ungentlemanly situation."

Here the visitor bowed and withdrew—in what manner could not precisely be ascertained—but in a well-concerted effort to discharge a bottle at "the villain," the slender chain was severed that depended from the ceiling, and the metaphysician prostrated by the down-fall of the lamp.



Wögel inv et sc

THE SYSTEM OF DOCTOR TARR

THE SYSTEM OF DOCTOR TARR AND PROFESSOR FETHER.

During the autumn of 18—, while on a tour through the extreme southern provinces of France, my route led me within a few miles of a certain *Maison de Santé*, or private madhouse, about which I had heard much in Paris from my medical friends. As I had never visited a place of the kind, I thought the opportunity too good to be lost; and so proposed to my traveling companion (a gentleman with whom I had made casual acquaintance a few days before) that we should turn aside for an hour or so and look through the establishment. To this he objected—pleading haste in the first place, and in the second, a very usual horror at the sight of a lunatic. He begged me, however, not to let any mere courtesy towards himself interfere with the gratification of my curiosity, and said that he would ride on leisurely, so that I might overtake him during the day, or, at all events, during the next. As he bade me good-bye, I bethought me that there might be some difficulty in obtaining access to the premises, and mentioned my fears on this point. He replied that, in fact, unless I had personal knowledge of the superintendent, Monsieur Maillard, or some credential in the way of a letter, a difficulty might be found to exist, as the regulations of these private madhouses were more rigid than the public hospital laws. For himself, he added, he had some

years since made the acquaintance of Maillard, and would so far assist me as to ride up to the door and introduce me, although his feelings on the subject of lunacy would not permit of his entering the house.

I thanked him, and turning from the main-road we entered a grass-grown by-path, which in half-an-hour nearly lost itself in a dense forest closing the base of a mountain. Through this dank and gloomy wood we rode some two miles, when the *Maison de Santé* came in view. It was a fantastic *château*, much dilapidated, and indeed scarcely tenantable through age and neglect. Its aspect inspired me with absolute dread, and, checking my horse, I half resolved to turn back. I soon, however, grew ashamed of my weakness and proceeded.

As we rode up to the gateway, I perceived it slightly open, and the visage of a man peering through. In an instant afterward, this man came forth, accosted my companion by name, shook him cordially by the hand and begged him to alight. It was Monsieur Maillard himself. He was a portly, fine-looking gentleman of the old school, with a polished manner, and a certain air of gravity, dignity, and authority, which was very impressive.

My friend having presented me, mentioned my desire to inspect the establishment, and received Monsieur Maillard's assurance that he would show me all attention, now took leave, and I saw him no more.

When he had gone, the superintendent ushered me into a small and exceedingly neat parlor, containing, among other indications of refined taste, many books, drawings, pots of flowers, and musical instruments. A cheerful fire blazed upon the hearth. At a piano, singing an aria from Bellini, sat a young and very beautiful woman, who, at my entrance, paused in her

song, and received me with graceful courtesy. Her voice was low, and her whole manner subdued. I thought, too, that I perceived the traces of sorrow in her countenance, which was excessively, although, to my taste, not unpleasantly pale. She was attired in deep mourning, and excited in my bosom a feeling of mingled respect, interest, and admiration.

I had heard, at Paris, that the institution of Monsieur Maillard was managed upon what is vulgarly termed the "system of soothing"—that all punishments were avoided—that even confinement was seldom resorted to—that the patients, while secretly watched, were left much apparent liberty, and that most of them were permitted to roam about the house and grounds in the ordinary apparel of persons in right mind.

Keeping these impressions in view, I was cautious in what I said before the young lady, for I could not be sure that she was sane; and in fact there was a certain restless brilliancy about her eyes which half led me to imagine she was not. I confined my remarks, therefore, to general topics, and to such as I thought would not be displeasing or exciting even to a lunatic. She replied in a perfectly rational manner to all that I said, and even her original observations were marked with the soundest good sense; but a long acquaintance with the metaphysics of *mania* had taught me to put no faith in such evidence of sanity, and I continued to practice, throughout the interview, the caution with which I commenced it.

Presently a smart footman in livery brought in a tray with fruit, wine, and other refreshments, of which I partook, the lady soon afterwards leaving the room. As she departed I turned my eyes in an inquiring manner towards my host.

"No," he said, "oh, no—a member of my family—my niece, and a most accomplished woman."

"I beg a thousand pardons for the suspicion," I replied, "but of course you will know how to excuse me. The excellent administration of your affairs here is well understood in Paris, and I thought it just possible, you know"—

"Yes, yes—say no more—or rather it is myself who should thank you for the commendable prudence you have displayed. We seldom find so much of fore-thought in young men, and, more than once, some unhappy *contretemps* has occurred in consequence of thoughtlessness on the part of our visitors. While my former system was in operation and my patients were permitted the privilege of roaming to and fro at will, they were often aroused to a dangerous frenzy by injudicious persons who called to inspect the house. Hence I was obliged to enforce a rigid system of exclusion; and none obtained access to the premises upon whose discretion I could not rely."

"While your *former* system was in operation!" I said, repeating his words—"do I understand you, then, to say that the 'soothing system' of which I have heard so much is no longer in force?"

"It is now," he replied, "several weeks since we have concluded to renounce it forever."

"Indeed! you astonish me!"

"We found it, sir," he said with a sigh, "absolutely necessary to return to the old usages. The *danger* of the soothing system was at all times appalling, and its advantages have been much over-rated, I believe, sir, that in this house it has been given a fair trial, if ever in any. We did everything that rational humanity

could suggest. I am sorry that you could not have paid us a visit at an earlier period, that you might have judged for yourself. But I presume you are conversant with the soothing practice—with its details."

"Not altogether. What I have heard has been at third or fourth hand."

"I may state the system then, in general terms, as one in which the patients were *ménagés* humored. We contradicted *no* fancies which entered the brains of the mad. On the contrary, we not only indulged but encouraged them; and many of our most permanent cures have been thus effected. There is no argument which so touches the feeble reason of the madman as the *reductio ad absurdum*. We have had men, for example, who fancied themselves chickens. The cure was, to insist upon the thing as a fact—to accuse the patient of stupidity in not sufficiently perceiving it to be a fact—and thus to refuse him any other diet for a week than that which properly appertains to a chicken. In this manner a little corn and gravel were made to perform wonders."

"But was this species of acquiescence all?"

"By no means. We put much faith in amusements of a simple kind, such as music, dancing, gymnastic exercises generally, cards, certain classes of books, and so forth. We affected to treat each individual as if for some ordinary physical disorder, and the word 'lunacy' was never employed. A great point was to set each lunatic to guard the actions of all the others. To repose confidence in the understanding or discretion of a madman is to gain him body and soul. In this way we were enabled to dispense with an expensive body of keepers."

"And you had no punishments of any kind?"

"None."

"And you never confined your patients?"

"Very rarely. Now and then, the malady of some individual growing to a crisis, or taking a sudden turn of fury, we conveyed him to a secret cell, lest his disorder should infect the rest, and there kept him until we could dismiss him to his friends; for with the raging maniac we have nothing to do. He is usually removed to the public hospitals."

"And you have now changed all this—and you think for the better?"

"Decidedly. The system had its disadvantages, and even its dangers. It is now, happily, exploded throughout all the *Maisons de Santé* of France."

"I am very much surprised," I said, "at what you tell me; for I made sure that, at this moment, no other method of treatment for mania existed in any portion of the country."

"You are young yet, my friend," replied my host, "but the time will arrive when you will learn to judge for yourself of what is going on in the world, without trusting to the gossip of others:—Believe nothing you hear, and only one half that you see. Now, about our *Maisons de Santé*, it is clear that some ignoramus has misled you. After dinner, however, when you have sufficiently recovered from the fatigue of your ride, I will be happy to take you over the house, and introduce to you a system which, in my opinion, and in that of every one who has witnessed its operation, is incomparably the most effectual as yet devised."

"Your own?" I inquired—"one of your own invention?"

"I am proud," he replied, "to acknowledge that it is—at least in some measure."

In this manner I conversed with Monsieur Maillard

for an hour or two, during which he showed me the gardens and conservatories of the place.

"I cannot let you see my patients," he said, "just at present. To a sensitive mind there is always more or less of the shocking in such exhibitions; and I do not wish to spoil your appetite for dinner. We will dine. I can give you some veal *à la Sainte Ménéhould*, with cauliflower in *velouté* sauce,—after that a glass of *clos Vougeot*—then your nerves will be sufficiently steadied."

At six dinner was announced; and my host conducted me into a large *salle à manger*, where a very numerous company were assembled—twenty-five or thirty in all. They were, apparently, people of rank—certainly of high breeding—although their habiliments, I thought, were extravagantly rich, partaking somewhat too much of the ostentatious finery of the *vieille cour*. I noticed that at least two-thirds of these guests were ladies; and some of the latter were by no means accoutred in what a Parisian would consider good taste at the present day. Many females, for example, whose age could not have been less than seventy, were bedecked with a profusion of jewelry, such as rings, bracelets, and ear-rings, and wore their bosoms and arms shamefully bare. I observed, too, that very few of the dresses were well made—or, at least, that very few of them fitted the wearers. In looking about I discovered the interesting girl to whom Monsieur Maillard had presented me in the little parlor; but my surprise was great to see her wearing a hoop and farthingale, with high-heeled shoes, and dirty cap of Brussels lace, so much too large for her that it gave her face a ridiculously diminutive expression. When I had first seen her she was attired, most becomingly, in deep mourning. There was an air of oddity, in short, about the

dress of the whole party, which, at first, caused me to recur to my original idea of the “soothing system,” and to fancy that Monsieur Maillard had been willing to deceive me until after dinner, that I might experience no uncomfortable feelings during the repast at finding myself dining with lunatics; but I remembered having been informed in Paris that the southern provincialists were a peculiarly eccentric people, with a vast number of antiquated notions; and then, too, upon conversing with several members of the company, my apprehensions were immediately and fully dispelled.

The dining-room itself, although perhaps sufficiently comfortable and of good dimensions, had nothing too much of elegance about it. For example, the floor was uncarpeted; in France, however, a carpet is frequently dispensed with. The windows, too, were without curtains; the shutters, being shut, were securely fastened with iron bars, applied diagonally, after the fashion of our ordinary shop-shutters. The apartment, I observed, formed in itself a wing of the *château*, and thus the windows were on three sides of the parallelogram—the door being at the other. There were no less than ten windows in all.

The table was superbly set out. It was loaded with plate, and more than loaded with delicacies. The profusion was absolutely barbaric. There were meats enough to have feasted the Anakim. Never in all my life had I witnessed so lavish, so wasteful, an expenditure of the good things of life. There seemed very little taste, however, in the arrangements; and my eyes, accustomed to quiet lights, were sadly offended by the prodigious glare of a multitude of wax candles which, in silver *candelabra*, were deposited upon the table and all about the room, wherever it was possible to find a place. There were several active servants in

attendee ; and upon a large table at the farther end of the apartment were seated seven or eight people with fiddles, fifes, trombones, and a drum. These fellows annoyed me very much at intervals during the repast, by an infinite variety of noises, which were intended for music, and which appeared to afford much entertainment to all present with the exception of myself.

Upon the whole, I could not help thinking that there was much of the *bizarre* about everything I saw—but then the world is made up of all kinds of persons, with all modes of thought, and all sorts of conventional customs. I had traveled, too, so much as to be quite an adept in the *nil admirari*; so I took my seat very coolly at the right hand of my host, and having an excellent appetite, did justice to the good cheer set before me.

The conversation in the meantime was spirited and general. The ladies, as usual, talked a great deal. I soon found that nearly all the company were well educated ; and my host was a world of good-humored anecdote in himself. He seemed quite willing to speak of his position as superintendent of a *Maison de Santé*; and, indeed, the topic of lunacy was, much to my surprise, a favorite one with all present. A great many amusing stories were told having reference to the *whims* of the patients.

“ We had a fellow here once,” said a fat little gentleman, who sat at my right—“ a fellow that fancied himself a tea-pot ; and, by the way, is it not especially singular how often this particular eructet has entered the brain of the lunatic? There is scarcely an insane asylum in France which cannot supply a human tea-pot. *Our* gentleman was a Britannia-ware tea-pot, and was careful to polish himself every morning with buckskin and whiting.”

"And then," said a tall man, just opposite, "we had here, not long ago, a person who had taken it into his head that he was a donkey—which allegorically speaking, you will say, was quite true. He was a troublesome patient; and we had much ado to keep him within bounds. For a long time he would eat nothing but thistles; but of this idea we soon cured him by insisting upon his eating nothing else. Then he was perpetually kicking out his heels—so—so"—

"Mr. De Kock! I will thank you to behave yourself!" here interrupted an old lady, who sat next to the speaker. "Please keep your feet to yourself! You have spoiled my brocade! Is it necessary, pray, to illustrate a remark in so practical a style? Our friend, here, can surely comprehend you without all this. Upon my word, you are nearly as great a donkey as the poor unfortunate imagined himself. Your acting is very natural, as I live."

"*Mille pardons! Ma'mselle!*" replied Monsieur De Kock, thus addressed—"a thousand pardons! I had no intention of offending. Ma'mselle Laplace—Monsieur De Kock will do himself the honor of taking wine with you."

Here Monsieur De Kock bowed low, kissed his hand with much ceremony, and took wine with Ma'mselle Laplace.

"Allow me, *mon ami*," now said Monsieur Maillard, addressing myself, "allow me to send you a morsel of this veal à la Ste. Ménéhould—you will find it particularly fine."

At this instant three sturdy waiters had just succeeded in depositing safely upon the table an enormous dish, or trencher, containing what I supposed to be the "*monstrum, horrendum, informe, ingens, cui lumen*

ademptum." A closer scrutiny assured me, however, that it was only a small calf roasted whole, and set upon its knees, with an apple in its mouth, as in the English fashion of dressing a hare.

"Thank you, no," I replied; "to say the truth, I am not particularly partial to veal *à la Ste.*—what is it? —for I do not find that it altogether agrees with me. I will change my plate, however, and try some of the rabbit."

There were several side-dishes on the table containing what appeared to be the ordinary French rabbit—a very delicious *moreau*, which I can recommend.

"Pierre," cried the host, "change this gentleman's plate, and give him a side-piece of this rabbit *au-chat*."

"This what?"

"This rabbit *au-chat*."

"Why, thank you—upon second thoughts, no. I will just help myself to some of the ham."

There is no knowing what one eats, thought I to myself, at the tables of these people of the province. I will have none of their rabbit *au-chat*—and for the matter of that, none of their *cat-au-rabbit* either.

"And then," said a cadaverous-looking personage, near the foot of the table, taking up the thread of the conversation where it had been broken off—"and then, among other oddities, we had a patient once upon a time who very pertinaciously maintained himself to be a Cordova cheese, and went about with a knife in his hand soliciting his friends to try a small slice from the middle of his leg."

"He was a great fool, beyond doubt," interposed some one, "but not to be compared with a certain individual whom we all know, with the exception of this strange gentleman. I mean the man who took himself for a

bottle of champagne, and always went off with a pop and a fizz, in this fashion."

Here the speaker, very rudely, as I thought, put his right thumb in his left cheek, withdrew it with a sound resembling the popping of a cork, and then, by a dexterous movement of the tongue upon the teeth, created a sharp hissing and fizzing which lasted for several minutes, in imitation of the frothing of champagne. This behavior, I saw plainly, was not very pleasing to Monsieur Maillard; but that gentleman said nothing, and the conversation was resumed by a very lean little man in a big wig.

"And then there was an ignoramus," said he, "who mistook himself for a frog; which, by the way, he resembled in no little degree. I wish you could have seen him, sir,"—here the speaker addressed myself—"it would have done your heart good to see the natural airs that he put on. Sir, if that man was *not* a frog, I can only observe that it is a pity he was not. His croak thus—o-o-o-o-gh—o-o-o-o-gh! was the finest note in the world—B flat; and when he put his elbows upon the table thus—after taking a glass or two of wine—and distended his mouth thus, and rolled up his eyes thus, and winked them with excessive rapidity thus, why then, sir, I take it upon myself to say positively that you would have been lost in admiration of the genius of the man."

"I have no doubt of it," I said.

"And then," said somebody else, "then there was Petit Gaillard, who thought himself a pinch of snuff, and was truly distressed because he could not take himself between his own finger and thumb."

"And then there was Jules Desoulières, who was a very singular genius indeed, and went mad with the

idea that he was a pumpkin. He persecuted the cook to make him up into pies—a thing which the cook indignantly refused to do. For my part, I am by no means sure that a pumpkin pie à la *Desoulières* would not have been very capital eating indeed!"

" You astonish me!" said I; and I looked inquisitively at Monsieur Maillard.

" Ha! ha! ha!" said that gentleman—" he! he! he! —hi! hi! hi!—ho! ho! ho!—hu! hu! hu!—very good indeed! You must not be astonished, *mon ami*; our friend here is a wit—a *drôle*—you must not understand him to the letter."

" And then," said some other one of the party, " then there was Bouffon le Grand—another extraordinary personage in his way. He grew deranged through love, and fancied himself possessed of two heads. One of these he maintained to be the head of Cicero; the other he imagined a composite one, being Demosthenes from the top of the forehead to the mouth, and Lord Brougham from the mouth to the chin. It is not impossible that he was wrong; but he would have convinced you of his being in the right; for he was a man of great eloquence. He had an absolute passion for oratory, and could not refrain from display. For example, he used to leap upon the dinner-table thus, and—and"—

Here a friend, at the side of the speaker, put a hand upon his shoulder, and whispered a few words in his ear; upon which he ceased talking with great suddenness, and sank back within his chair.

" And then," said the friend who had whispered, " there was Boulard, the tee-totum. I call him the tee-totum, because, in fact, he was seized with the droll, but not altogether irrational, crotchet that he had been

converted into a tee-totum. You would have roared with laughter to see him spin. He would turn round upon one heel by the hour, in this manner—so ”—

Here the friend whom he had just interrupted by a whisper performed an exactly similar office for himself.

“ But then,” cried an old lady, at the top of her voice, “your Monsieur Boullard was a madman, and a very silly madman at best; for who, allow me to ask you, ever heard of a human tee-totum? The thing is absurd. Madame Joyeuse was a more sensible person, as you know. She had a crotchet, but it was instinct with common sense, and gave pleasure to all who had the honor of her acquaintance. She found, upon mature deliberation, that by some accident she had been turned into a chicken-cock; but, as such, she behaved with propriety. She flapped her wings with prodigious effect —so—so—so—and as for her crow, it was delicious! Cock-a-doodle-doo! — cock-a-doodle-doo—cock-a-doodle-de-doo-doo-dooo-do-o-o-o-o-o-o ! ”

“ Madame Joyeuse, I will thank you to behave yourself!” here interrupted our host, very angrily. “ You can either conduct yourself as a lady should do, or you can quit the table forthwith—take your choice.”

The lady (whom I was much astonished to hear addressed as Madame Joyeuse, after the description of Madame Joyeuse she had just given) blushed up to the eyebrows, and seemed exceedingly abashed at the reproof. She hung down her head and said not a syllable in reply. But another and younger lady resumed the theme. It was my beautiful girl of the little parlor!

“ Oh, Madame Joyeuse *was* a fool!” she exclaimed; “ but there was really much sound sense, after all, in the opinion of Eugénie Salsafette. She was a very

beautiful and painfully modest young lady, who thought the ordinary mode of habiliment indecent, and wished to dress herself, always by getting outside, instead of inside of her clothes. It is a thing very easily done, after all. You have only to do so—and then so—so—so—and then so—so—so—and then"—

"Mon Dieu! Ma'mselle Salsafette!" here cried a dozen voices at once. "What *are* you about?—forbear!—that is sufficient!—we see, very plainly, how it is done!—hold!—hold!" and several persons were already leaping from their seats to withhold Ma'mselle Salsafette from putting herself upon a par with the Medicean Venus, when the point was very effectually and suddenly accomplished by a series of loud screams, or yells, from some portion of the main body of the château.

My nerves were very much affected, indeed, by these yells; but the rest of the company I really pitied. I never saw any set of reasonable people so thoroughly frightened in my life. They all grew as pale as so many corpses, and, shrinking within their seats, sat quivering and gibbering with terror, and listening for a repetition of the sound. It came again—louder and seemingly nearer—and then a third time *very* loud, and then a fourth time with a vigor evidently diminished. At this apparent dying away of the noise, the spirits of the company were immediately regained, and all was life and anecdote as before, I now ventured to inquire the cause of the disturbance.

"A mere *bagatelle*," said Monsieur Maillard. "We are used to these things, and care, really, very little about them. The lunatics, every now and then, get up a howl in concert; one starting another, as is sometimes the case with a bevy of dogs at night. It occasionally happens, however, that the *concerto* yells are

succeeded by a simultaneous effort at breaking loose, when, of course, some little danger is to be apprehended."

"And how many have you in charge?"

"At present we have not more than ten altogether."

"Principally females, I presume?"

"Oh, no,—every one of them men, and stout fellows, too, I can tell you."

"Indeed! I have always understood that the majority of lunatics were of the gentler sex."

"It is generally so, but not always. Some time ago there were about twenty-seven patients here, and of that number no less than eighteen were women; but, lately, matters have changed very much, as you see."

"Yes—have changed very much, as you see," here interrupted the gentleman who had broken the shins of Ma'mselle Laplace.

"Yes—have changed very much, as you see!" chimed in the whole company at once.

"Hold your tongues, every one of you!" said my host, in a great rage. Whereupon the whole company maintained a dead silence for nearly a minute. As for one lady she obeyed Monsieur Maillard to the letter, and thrusting out her tongue, which was an excessively long one, held it very resignedly, with both hands, until the end of the entertainment.

"And this gentlewoman," said I, to Monsieur Maillard bending over and addressing him in a whisper—"this good lady who has just spoken, and who gives us the cock-a-doodle-de-doo—she, I presume, is harmless—quite harmless, eh?"

"Harmless!" ejaculated he, in unfeigned surprise, "why—why, what *can* you mean?"

"Only slightly touched?" said I, touching my head,

"I take it for granted that she is not particularly—not dangerously affected, eh?"

"*Mon Dieu!* what is it you imagine? This lady, my particular old friend, Madame Joyeuse, is as absolutely sane as myself. She has her little eccentricities, to be sure—but then, you know all old women—all *very* old women—are more or less eccentric!"

"To be sure," said I—"to be sure—and then the rest of these ladies and gentlemen"—

"Are my friends and keepers," interrupted Monsieur Maillard, drawing himself up with *hauteur*—"my very good friends and assistants."

"What! all of them?" I asked—"the women and all?"

"Assuredly," he said—"we could not do at all without the women; they are the best lunatic nurses in the world; they have a way of their own, you know; their bright eyes have a marvelous effect;—something like the fascination of a snake, you know."

"To be sure," said I—"to be sure! They behave a little odd, eh?—they are a little *queer*, eh?—don't you think so?"

"Odd!—queer!—why, do you really think so? We are not very prudish, to be sure, here in the South—do pretty much as we please—enjoy life, and all that sort of thing, you know"—

"To be sure," said I: "to be sure."

"And then, perhaps, this *clos Vougeot* is a little heady, you know—a little *strong*—you understand, eh?"

"To be sure," said I; "to be sure. By-the-bye, monsieur, did I understand you to say that the system you have adopted, in place of the celebrated soothing system, was one of very rigorous severity?"

"By no means. Our confinement is necessarily close; but the treatment—the medical treatment, I mean—is rather agreeable to the patient than otherwise."

"And the new system is one of your own invention?"

"Not altogether. Some portions of it are referable to Professor Tarr, of whom you have necessarily heard; and, again, there are modifications in my plan which I am happy to acknowledge as belonging of right to the celebrated Fether, with whom, if I mistake not, you have the honor of an intimate acquaintance."

"I am quite ashamed to confess," I replied, "that I have never even heard the name of either gentleman before."

"Good Heavens!" ejaculated mine host, drawing back his chair abruptly, and uplifting his hands. "I surely do not hear you aright! You did not intend to say, eh? that you had never *heard* either of the learned Doctor Tarr, or of the celebrated Professor Fether?"

"I am forced to acknowledge my ignorance," I replied; "but the truth should be held inviolate above all things. Nevertheless, I feel humbled to the dust, not to be acquainted with the works of these, no doubt, extraordinary men. I will seek out their writings forthwith, and peruse them with deliberate care. Monsieur Maillard, you have really—I must confess it—you have *really*—made me ashamed of myself!"

And this was a fact.

"Say no more, my good young friend," he said kindly, pressing my hand—"join me now in a glass of Sauterne."

We drank. The company followed our example, without stint. They chatted—they jested—they laughed—they perpetrated a thousand absurdities—the fiddles

shrieked—the drums row-de-dowed—the trombones bellowed like so many brazen bulls of Phalaris—and the whole scene, growing gradually worse and worse as the wines gained the ascendency, became at length a sort of Pandemonium *in petto*. In the meantime, Monsieur Maillard and myself, with some bottles of Sauterne and *clos Vougeot* between us, continued our conversation at the top of the voice. A word spoken in an ordinary key stood no more chance of being heard than the voice of a fish from the bottom of Niagara Falls.

"And, sir," said I, screaming in his ear, "you mentioned something before dinner about the danger incurred in the old system of soothing. How is that?"

"Yes," he replied, "there was occasionally very great danger indeed. There is no accounting for the caprices of madmen; and, in my opinion, as well as in that of Dr. Tarr and Professor Fether, it is *never* safe to permit them to run at large unattended. A lunatic may be 'soothed,' as it is called, for a time, but in the end he is very apt to become obstreperous. His cunning, too, is proverbial and great. If he has a project in view, he conceals his design with a marvelous wisdom; and the dexterity with which he counterfeits sanity presents to the metaphysician one of the most singular problems in the study of mind. When a madman appears *thoroughly* sane, indeed, it is high time to put him in a strait jacket."

"But the *danger*, my dear sir, of which you were speaking—in your own experience—during your control of this house—have you had practical reason to think liberty hazardous in the case of a lunatic?"

"Here?—in my own experience?—why, I may say yes. For example:—no *very* long while ago, a singular circumstance occurred in this very house. The

'soothing system,' you know, was then in operation, and the patients were at large. They behaved remarkably well—especially so—any one of sense might have known that some devilish scheme was brewing from that particular fact, that the fellows behaved so *remarkably* well. And, sure enough, one fine morning the keepers found themselves pinioned hand and foot, and thrown into the cells, where they were attended, as if *they* were the lunatics, by the lunatics themselves, who had usurped the offices of the keepers."

" You don't tell me so! I never heard of anything so absurd in my life!"

" Fact—it all came to pass by means of a stupid fellow—a lunatic—who, by some means had taken it into his head that he had invented a better system of government than any ever heard of before—of lunatic government, I mean. He wished to give his invention a trial, I suppose, and so he persuaded the rest of the patients to join him in a conspiracy for the overthrow of the reigning powers."

" And he really succeeded?"

" No doubt of it. The keepers and kept were soon made to exchange places. Not that exactly either, for the madmen had been free, but the keepers were shut up in cells forthwith, and treated, I am sorry to say, in a very cavalier manner."

" But I presume a counter-revolution was soon effected. This condition of things could not have long existed. The country people in the neighborhood—visitors coming to see the establishment—would have given the alarm."

" There you are out. The head rebel was too cunning for that. He admitted no visitors at all—with the exception, one day, of a very stupid-looking

young gentleman of whom he had no reason to be afraid. He let him in to see the place—just by way of variety—to have a little fun with him. As soon as he had gammoned him sufficiently, he let him out, and sent him about his business."

"And *how* long, then, did the madmen reign?"

"Oh, a very long time, indeed—a month certainly—how much longer I can't precisely say. In the meantime, the lunatics had a jolly season of it—that you may swear. They doffed their own shabby clothes, and made free with the family wardrobe and jewels. The cellars of the *château* were well stocked with wine; and these madmen are just the devils that know how to drink it. They lived well, I can tell you."

"And the treatment—what was the particular species of treatment which the leader of the rebels put into operation?"

"Why, as for that, a madman is not necessarily a fool, as I have already observed; and it is my honest opinion that his treatment was a much better treatment than that which it superseded. It was a very capital system indeed—simple—neat—no trouble at all, in fact it was delicious—it was"—

Here my host's observations were cut short by another series of yells, of the same character as those which had previously disconcerted us. This time, however, they seemed to proceed from persons rapidly approaching.

"Gracious heavens?" I ejaculated—"the lunatics have most undoubtedly broken loose."

"I very much fear it is so," replied Monsieur Maillard, now becoming excessively pale. He had scarcely finished the sentence before loud shouts and imprecations were heard beneath the windows; and immediately

afterwards it became evident that some persons outside were endeavoring to gain entrance into the room. The door was beaten with what appeared to be a sledge-hammer, and the shutters were wrenched and shaken with prodigious violence.

A scene of the most terrible confusion ensued. Monsieur Maillard, to my excessive astonishment, threw himself under the sideboard. I had expected more resolution at his hands. The members of the orchestra, who for the last fifteen minutes had been seemingly too much intoxicated to do duty, now sprang all at once to their feet and to their instruments, and, scrambling upon their table, broke out with one accord into "Yankee Doodle," which they performed, if not exactly in tune, at least with an energy superhuman, during the whole of the uproar.

Meantime, upon the main dining-table, among the bottles and glasses, leaped the gentleman who with such difficulty had been restrained from leaping there before. As soon as he fairly settled himself he commenced an oration, which no doubt was a very capital one if it could only have been heard. At the same moment, the man with the tee-totum predilections set himself to spinning around the apartment with immense energy, and with arms outstretched at right angles with his body, so that he had all the air of a tee-totum in fact, and knocked everybody down that happened to get in his way. And now, too, hearing an incredible popping and fizzing of champagne, I discovered at length that it proceeded from the person who performed the bottle of that delicate drink during dinner. And then, again, the frog-man croaked away as if the salvation of his soul depended upon every note that he uttered. And in the midst of all this,

the continuous braying of a donkey arose over all. As for my old friend Madame Joyeuse, I really could have wept for the poor lady, she appeared so terribly perplexed. All she did, however, was to stand up in a corner by the fireplace, and sing out incessantly, at the top of her voice, "Cock-a-doodle-de-doooooh!"

And now came the climax—the catastrophe of the drama. As no resistance beyond whooping and yelling and cock-a-doodleing was offered to the encroachments of the party without, the ten windows were very speedily and almost simultaneously broken in. But I shall never forget the emotions of wonder and horror with which I gazed, when, leaping through these windows and down among us *péle-mêle*, fighting, stamping, scratching, and howling, there rushed a perfect army of what I took to be chimpanzees, ourang-outangs, or big black baboons of the Cape of Good Hope.

I received a terrible beating, after which I rolled under a sofa and lay still. After lying there some fifteen minutes, however, during which time I listened with all my ears to what was going on in the room, I came to some satisfactory *dénouement* of this tragedy. Monsieur Maillard, it appeared, in giving me the account of the lunatic who had excited his fellows to rebellion, had been merely relating his own exploits. This gentleman had, indeed, some two or three years before been the superintendent of the establishment, but grew crazy himself, and so became a patient. This fact was unknown to the traveling companion who introduced me. The keepers, ten in number, having been suddenly overpowered, were first well tarred, then carefully feathered, and then shut up in underground cells. They had been so imprisoned for more than a month, during which period Monsieur

Maillard had generously allowed them not only the tar and feathers (which constituted his "system"), but some bread and abundance of water. The latter was pumped on them daily. At length, one escaping through a sewer gave freedom to all the rest.

The "soothing system," with important modifications, has been resumed at the *château*; yet I cannot help agreeing with Monsieur Maillard that his own "treatment" was a very capital one of its kind. As he justly observed, it was "simple, neat, and gave no trouble at all—not the least."

I have only to add that, although I have searched every library in Europe for the works of Doctor *Tarr* and Professor *Fether*, I have, up to the present day, utterly failed in my endeavors at procuring an edition.

THE LITERARY LIFE OF THINGUM BOB,
ESQ.,

LATE EDITOR OF THE "GOOSETHERUMFOODLE."

BY HIMSELF.

I am now growing in years, and—since I understand that Shakespeare and Mr. Emmons are deceased—it is not impossible that I may even die. It has occurred to me, therefore, that I may as well retire from the field of letters and repose upon my laurels. But I am ambitious of signalizing my abdication of the literary sceptre by some important bequest to posterity; and perhaps I cannot do a better thing than just pen for it an account of my earlier career. My name, indeed, has been so long and so constantly before the public eye, that I am not only willing to admit the naturalness of the interest which it has everywhere excited, but ready to satisfy the extreme curiosity which it has inspired. In fact, it is no more than the duty of him who achieves greatness to leave behind him, in his ascent, such landmarks as may guide others to be great. I propose, therefore, in the present paper (which I had some idea of calling "Memoranda to serve for the Literary History of America"), to give a detail of those important, yet feeble and tottering first steps, by which, at length, I attained the high road to the pinnacle of human renown.

Of one's *very* remote ancestors it is superfluous to say much. My father, Thomas Bob, Esq., stood for

many years at the summit of his profession, which was that of a merchant-barber in the city of Smug. His warehouse was the resort of all the principal people of the place, and especially of the editorial corps—a body which inspires all about it with profound veneration and awe. For my own part, I regarded them as gods, and drank in with avidity the rich wit and wisdom which continuously flowed from their august mouths during the process of what is styled “lather.” My first moment of positive inspiration must be dated from that ever-memorable epoch, when one brilliant conductor of the *Gad-Fly*, in the interval of the important process just mentioned, recited aloud, before a conclave of our apprentices, an inimitable poem in honor of the “Only genuine Oil-of-Bob” (so called from its talented inventor, my father), and for which effusion the editor of the *Fly* was remunerated with a regal liberality, by the firm of Thomas Bob and Company, merchant-barbers.

The genius of the stanzas to the “Oil-of-Bob” first breathed into me, I say, the divine *afflatus*. I resolved at once to become a great man, and to commence by becoming a great poet. That very evening I fell upon my knees at the feet of my father.

“Father,” I said, “pardon me!—but I have a soul above lather. It is my firm intention to cut the shop. I would be an editor—I would be a poet—I would pen stanzas to the ‘Oil-of-Bob.’ Pardon me and aid me to be great!”

“My dear Thingum,” replied my father (I had been christened Thingum after a wealthy relative so surnamed), “my dear Thingum,” he said, raising me from my knees by the ears—“Thingum, my boy, you’re a trump, and take after your father in having a soul.

You have an immense head, too, and it must hold a great many brains. This I have long seen, and therefore had thoughts of making you a lawyer. The business, however, has grown ungenteel, and that of a politieian don't pay. Upon the whole, you judge wisely—the trade of editor is best; and if you can be a poet at the same time, as most of the editors are, by-the-by—why, you will kill two birds with one stone. To eneourage you in the beginning of things, I will allow you a garret, pen, ink, and paper, a rhyming dictionary, and a copy of the *Gad-Fly*. I suppose you would scarcely demand any more."

"I would be an ungrateful villain if I did," I replied with enthusiasm. "Your generosity is boundless. I will repay it by making you the father of a genius."

Thus ended my conference with the best of men, and immediately upon its termination I betook myself with zeal to my poetical labors, as upon these, chiefly, I founded my hopes of ultimate elevation to the editorial chair.

In my first attempts at composition I found the stanzas to the "Oil-of-Bob" rather a drawback than otherwise. Their splendor dazzled more than they enlightened me. The contemplation of their excellence tended naturally to discourage me, by comparison with my own abortions, so that for a long time I labored in vain. At length there came into my head one of those exquisitely original ideas which now and then *will* permeate the brain of a man of genius. It was this,—or rather, thus was it carried into execution. From the rubbish of an old book-stall, in a very remote corner of the town, I got together several antique and altogether unknown or forgotten volumes. The book-seller sold them to me for a song. From one of these,

which purported to be a translation of one Dante's "Inferno," I copied with remarkable neatness a long passage about a man named Ugolino, who had a parcel of brats. From another, which contained a good many old plays by some person whose name I forget, I extracted in the same manner, and with the same care, a great number of lines about "angels" and "ministers saying grace," and "goblins damned," and more besides of that sort. From a third, which was the composition of some blind man or other, either a Greek or a Choctaw—I cannot be at the pains of remembering every trifle exactly—I took about fifty verses beginning with "Achilles' wrath," and "grease," and something else. From a fourth, which I recollect was also the work of a blind man, I selected a page or two all about "hail" and "holy light;" and although a blind man has no business to write about light, still the verses were sufficiently good in their way.

Having made fair copies of these poems, I signed every one of them "Oppodeldoc" (a fine, sonorous name), and doing each up nicely in a separate envelope, I dispatched one to each of the four principal Magazines, with a request for speedy insertion and prompt pay. The result of this well-conceived plan, however (the success of which would have saved me much trouble in after life), served to convince me that some editors are not to be bamboozled, and gave the *coup-de-grâce* (as they say in France) to my nascent hopes (as they say in the city of the Transcendentals).

The fact is, that each and every one of the Magazines in question gave Mr. "Oppodeldoc" a complete using-up in the "Monthly Notices to Correspondents." The "Hum-Drum" gave him a dressing after this fashion :

“ ‘Oppodeldoc’ (whoever he is) has sent us a long *tirade* concerning a Bedlamite whom he styles ‘Ugolino,’ who had a great many children that should have been all whipped and sent to bed without their suppers. The whole affair is exceedingly tame—not to say *flat*. ‘Oppodeldoc’ (whoever he is) is entirely devoid of imagination—and imagination, in our humble opinion, is not only the soul of POESY, but also its very heart. ‘Oppodeldoe’ (whoever he is) has the audacity to demand of us, for his twaddle, a ‘speedy insertion and prompt pay.’ We neither insert nor purchase any stuff of the sort. There can be no doubt, however, that he would meet with a ready sale for all the balderdash he can scribble at the office of either the *Rowdy-Dow*, the *Lollipop*, or the *Goosetherumfoddle*.”

All this, it must be acknowledged, was very severe upon “Oppodeldoe”—but the unkindest cut was putting the word POESY in small caps. In those five pre-eminent letters what a world of bitterness is there not involved!

But “Oppodeldoe” was punished with equal severity in the *Rowdy-Dow*, which spoke thus :

“We have received a most singular and insolent communieation from a person (whoever he is) signing himself ‘Oppodeldoe’—thus desecrating the greatness of the illustrious Roman Emperor so named. Accompanying the letter of ‘Oppodeldoe’ (whoever he is) we find sundry lines of most disgusting and unmeaning rant about ‘angels and ministers of grace’—rant such as no madman short of a Nat Lee or an ‘Oppodeldoe’ could possibly perpetrate. And for this trash of trash, we are modestly requested to ‘pay promptly.’ No, sir—no! We pay for nothing of *that* sort. Apply to the *Hum-Drum*, the *Lollipop*, or the *Goosetherumfoddle*. These *periodicals* will undoubtedly accept any literary offal you may send them—and as undoubtedly *promise* to pay for it.”

This was bitter indeed upon poor “Oppodeldoe;” but, in this instance, the weight of the satire falls upon the *Hum-Drum*, the *Lollipop*, and the *Goosetherumfoddle*,” who are pungently styled “periodicals”—in italics, too—a thing that must have cut them to the heart.

Scarcely less savage was the “*Lollipop*,” which thus discoursed :

“Some *individual*, who rejoices in the appellation ‘Oppodeldoe’ (to what low uses are the names of the illustrious dead too often applied), has enclosed us some fifty or sixty *verses* commencing after this fashion :

‘Achilles’ wrath, to Greece the direful spring
Of woes unnumbered,’ &c. &c. &c. &c.

“‘Oppodeldoc’ (whoever he is) is respectfully informed that there is not a printer’s devil in our office who is not in the daily habit of composing better *lines*. Those of ‘Oppodeldoc’ will not scan. ‘Oppodeldoc’ should learn to *count*. But why he should have received the idea that *we* (of all others, *we!*) would disgrace our pages with his ineffable nonsense is utterly beyond comprehension. Why, the absurd twaddle is scarcely good enough for the *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, the *Goosetherumfoodie*—things that are in the practice of publishing ‘Mother Goose’s Melodies’ as original lyrics. And ‘Oppodeldoc’ (whoever he is) has even the assurance to demand *pay* for his drivel. Does ‘Oppodeldoc’ (whoever he is) know—is he aware—that we could not be paid to insert it?”

As I perused this I felt myself growing gradually smaller and smaller, and when I came to the point at which the editor sneered at the poem as “verses,” there was little more than an ounce of me left. As for “Oppodeldoc,” I began to experience compassion for the poor fellow. But the *Goosetherumfoodie* showed, if possible, less mercy than the *Lollipop*. It was the *Goosetherumfoodie* that said :

“A wretched poetaster, who signs himself ‘Oppodeldoc’ is silly enough to fancy that *we* will print and *pay for* a medley of incoherent and ungrammatical bombast which he has transmitted to us, and which commences with the following most *intelligible* line :

‘Hail, Holy Light! Offspring of Heaven, first born.’

“We say ‘most *intelligible*,’ ‘Oppodeldoc’ (whoever he is) will be kind enough to tell us, perhaps, how ‘*hail*’ can be ‘*holy light*.’ We always regard it as *frozen rain*. Will he inform us, also, how frozen rain can be at one and the same time both ‘*holy light*’ (whatever that is) and an ‘*offspring*?—which latter term (if we understand anything about English) is only employed with propriety in reference to small babies of about six weeks old. But it is preposterous to descant upon such absurdity—although ‘Oppodeldoc’ (whoever he is) has the unparalleled effrontry to suppose that we will not only ‘insert’ his ignorant ravings, but (absolutely) *pay for them*!

“Now this is fine—it is rich!—and we have half a mind to punish this young scribbler for his egotism by really publishing his effusion *verbatim et literatim*, as he has written it. We could inflict no punishment so severe, and *would* inflict it, but for the boredom which we should cause our readers in so doing.

“Let ‘Oppodeldoc’ (whoever he is) send any future *composition* of like character to the *Hum-Drum*, the *Lollipop*, or the *Rowdy-Dow*. They will ‘insert’ it. They ‘insert’ every month just such stuff. Send it to them. WE are not to be insulted with impunity.”

This made an end of me; and as for the *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, and the *Lollipop*, I never could comprehend how they survived it. The putting them in the smallest possible *minion* (that was the rub—thereby insinuating their lowness—their baseness), while WE stood looking down upon them in gigantic capitals!—oh it was *too* bitter!—it was wormwood—it was gall. Had I been either of these periodicals I would have spared no pains to have the *Goosetherumfoodle* prosecuted. It might have been done under the Act for the “Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.” As for “Oppodeldoc” (whoever he was), I had by this time lost all patience with the fellow, and sympathized with him no longer. He was a fool beyond doubt (whoever he was), and got not a kick more than he deserved.

The result of my experiment with the old books convinced me, in the first place, that “honesty is the best policy,” and in the second, that if I could not write better than Mr. Dante and the two blind men, and the rest of the old set, it would at least be a difficult matter to write worse. I took heart, therefore, and determined to prosecute the “entirely original” (as they say on the covers of the magazines) at whatever cost of study and pains. I again placed before my eyes, as a model, the brilliant stanzas on “The Oil-of-Bob” by the editor of the *Gad-Fly*, and resolved to construct an Ode on the same sublime theme, in rivalry of what had already been done.

With my first verse I had no material difficulty. It ran thus:—

“To pen an Ode upon the ‘Oil-of-Bob’”

Having carefully looked out, however, all the legitimate rhymes to “Bob,” I found it impossible to proceed.

In this dilemma I had recourse to paternal aid; and after some hours of mature thought, my father and myself thus constructed the poem:—

“To pen an Ode upon the ‘Oil-of-Bob’
Is all sorts of a job.”

(Signed) SNOB.”

To be sure, this composition was of no very great length—but “I have yet to learn,” as they say in the *Edinburgh Review*, that the mere extent of a literary work has anything to do with its merit. As for the Quarterly cant about “sustained effort,” it is impossible to see the sense of it. Upon the whole, therefore, I was satisfied with the success of my maiden attempt, and now the only question regarded the disposal I should make of it. My father suggested that I should send it to the *Gad-Fly*—but there were two reasons which operated to prevent me from so doing. I dreaded the jealousy of the editor—and I had ascertained that he did not pay for original contributions. I therefore, after due deliberation, consigned the article to the more dignified pages of the *Lollipop*, and awaited the event in anxiety, but with resignation.

In the very next published number I had the proud satisfaction of seeing my poem printed at length as the leading article, with the following significant words, prefixed in italics and between brackets:—

“[We call the attention of our readers to the subjoined admirable stanzas on ‘The Oil-of-Bob.’ We need say nothing of their sublimity, or of their pathos:—it is impossible to peruse them without tears. Those who have been nauseated with a sad dose on the same august topic from the goose-quill of the editor of the ‘Gad-Fly,’ will do well to compare the two compositions.]”

“P. S.—We are consumed with anxiety to probe the mystery which envelops the evident pseudonym ‘Snob.’ May we hope for a personal interview?]”

All this was scarcely more than justice, but it was, I confess, rather more than I had expected—I acknowledged this, be it observed, to the everlasting disgrace

of my country and of mankind. I lost no time, however, in calling upon the editor of the *Lollipop*, and had the good fortune to find this gentleman at home. He saluted me with an air of profound respect, slightly blended with a fatherly and patronizing admiration, wrought in him no doubt by my appearance of extreme youth and inexperience. Begging me to be seated, he entered at once upon the subject of my poem;—but modesty will ever forbid me to repeat the thousand compliments which he lavished upon me. The eulogies of Mr. Crab (such was the editor's name) were, however, by no means fulsomely indiscriminate. He analyzed my composition with much freedom and great ability—not hesitating to point out a few trivial defects—a circumstance which elevated him highly in my esteem. The *Gad-Fly* was, of course, brought upon the *tapis*, and I hope never to be subjected to a criticism so searching, or to rebukes so withering, as were bestowed by Mr. Crab upon that unhappy effusion. I had been accustomed to regard the editor of the *Gad-Fly* as something super-human; but Mr. Crab soon disabused me of that idea. He set the literary as well as the personal character of the Fly (so Mr. C. satirically designed the rival editor) in its true light. He, the Fly, was very little better than he should be. He had written infamous things. He was a penny-a-liner, and a buffoon. He was a villain. He had composed a tragedy which set the whole country in a guffaw, and a farce which deluged the universe in tears. Besides all this, he had the impudence to pen what he meant for a lampoon upon himself (Mr. Crab), and the temerity to style him "an ass." Should I at any time wish to express my opinion of Mr. Fly, the pages of the *Lollipop*, Mr. Crab assured me, were at my unlimited disposal. In the meantime, as it was very

certain that I would be attacked in the *Fly* for my attempt at composing a rival poem on the "Oil-of-Bob," he (Mr. Crab) would take it upon himself to attend, pointedly, to my private and personal interests. If I were not made a man of at once, it should not be the fault of himself (Mr. Crab).

Mr. Crab having now paused in his discourse (the latter portion of which I found it impossible to comprehend), I ventured to suggest something about the remuneration which I had been taught to expect from my poem, by an announcement on the cover of the *Lollipop*, declaring that it (the *Lollipop*) "insisted upon being permitted to pay exorbitant prices for all accepted contributions, frequently expending more money for a single brief poem than the whole annual cost of the *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, and the *Goosetherumfoodle* combined."

As I mentioned the word "remuneration" Mr. Crab first opened his eyes, and then his mouth, to quite a remarkable extent; causing his personal appearance to resemble that of a highly-agitated elderly duck in the act of quacking—and in this condition he remained (ever and anon pressing his hands tightly to his forehead, as if in a state of desperate bewilderment) until I had nearly made an end of what I had to say.

Upon my conclusion, he sank back into his seat, as if much overcome, letting his arms fall lifelessly by his side, but keeping his mouth still rigorously open, after the fashion of the duck. While I remained in speechless astonishment at behavior so alarming, he suddenly leaped to his feet and made a rush at the bell-rope; but just as he reached this, he appeared to have altered his intention, whatever it was, for he dived under a table and immediately reappeared with a cudgel. This he was in the act of uplifting (for what purpose I am at a

loss to imagine) when, all at once, there came a benign smile over his features, and he sank placidly back in his chair.

"Mr. Bob," he said (for I had sent up my card before ascending myself), "Mr. Bob, you are a young man, I presume—*very?*"

I assented; adding that I had not yet concluded my third lustrum.

"Ah!" he replied, "very good! I see how it is—say no more! Touching this matter of compensation, what you observe is very just: in fact, it is excessively so. But ah—ah—the *first* contribution—the *first*, I say—it is never the Magazine custom to pay for—you comprehend, eh? The truth is, we are usually the *recipients* in such case." [Mr. Crab smiled blandly as he emphasized the word "recipients."] "For the most part we are *paid* for the insertion of a maiden attempt—especially in verse. In the second place, Mr. Bob, the Magazine rule is never to disburse what we term in France the *argent comptant*. I have no doubt you understand. In a quarter or two after the publication of the article—or in a year or two—we make no objection to giving our note at nine months—provided always that we can so arrange our affairs as to be quite certain of a 'burst up' in six. I really do hope, Mr. Bob, that you will look upon this explanation as satisfactory." Here Mr. Crab concluded, and the tears stood in his eyes.

Grieved to the soul at having been, however innocently, the cause of pain to so eminent and so sensitive a man, I hastened to apologize, and to reassure him, by expressing my perfect coincidence with his views, as well as my entire appreciation of the delicacy of his position. Having done all this in a neat speech, I took leave.

One fine morning, very shortly afterwards, "I awoke

and found myself famous." The extent of my renown will be best estimated by reference to the editorial opinions of the day. These opinions, it will be seen, were embodied in critical notices of the number of the *Lollipop* containing my poem, and are perfectly satisfactory, conclusive, and clear, with the exception, perhaps, of the hieroglyphical marks, "Sept. 15—1*t.*" appended to each of the critiques.

The *Owl*, a journal of profound sagacity, and well known for the deliberate gravity of its literary decisions—the *Owl*, I say, spoke as follows:—

"THE LOLLIPOP!" The October number of this delicious magazine surpasses its predecessors, and sets competition at defiance. In the beauty of its typography and paper—in the number and excellence of its steel plates—as well as in the literary merit of its contributions—the *Lollipop* compares with its slow-paced rivals as Hyperion with a Satyr. The *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, and the *Goosetherumfoode* excel, it is true, in braggadocio, but in all other points give us the *Lollipop*! How this celebrated journal can sustain its evidently tremendous expenses is more than we can understand. To be sure, it has a circulation of 100,000, and its subscription-list has increased one-fourth during the last month; but, on the other hand, the sums it disburses constantly for contributions are inconceivable. It is reported that Mr. Slyass received no less than thirty-seven and a half cents for his inimitable paper on 'Pigs.' With Mr. CRAB as editor, and with such names upon the list of contributors as SNOB and Slyass, there can be no such word as 'fail' for the *Lollipop*. Go and subscribe. *Sept. 15, 1*t.**

I must say that I was gratified with this high-toned notice from a paper so respectable as the *Owl*. The placing my name—that is to say, my *nom de guerre*—in priority of station to that of the great Slyass, was a compliment as happy as I felt it to be deserved.

My attention was next arrested by these paragraphs in the *Toad*—a print highly distinguished for its uprightness and independence—for its entire freedom from sycophancy and subservience to the givers of dinners:—

"The *Lollipop* for October is out in advance of all its contemporaries, and infinitely surpasses them, of course, in the splendor of its embellishments, as well as in the richness of its literary contents. The *Hum-Drum*,

the *Rowdy-Dow*, the *Goosetherumfoodle* excel, we admit, in braggadocio, but in all other points give us the *Lollipop*. How this celebrated magazine can sustain its evidently tremendous expenses is more than we can understand. To be sure, it has a circulation of 200,000, and its subscription-list has increased one-third during the last fortnight, but, on the other hand, the sums it disburses monthly for contributions are fearfully great. We learn that Mr. Mumblethumb received no less than fifty cents for his late 'Monody in a Mud-Puddle.'

"Among the original contributors to the present number we notice (besides the eminent editor, MR. CRAB) such men as SNOB, Slyass and Mumblethumb. Apart from the editorial matter, the most valuable paper, nevertheless, is, we think, a poetical gem by 'SNOB, on the Oil-of-Bob'—but our readers must not suppose from the title of this incomparable *bijou* that it bears any similitude to some balderdash on the same subject by a certain contemptible individual whose name is unmentionable to ears polite. The present poem 'On the Oil-of-Bob,' has excited universal anxiety and curiosity in respect to the owner of the evident pseudonym, 'Snob'—a curiosity which, happily, we have it in our power to satisfy. 'Snob' is the *nom-de-plume* of Mr. Thingum Bob, of this city—a relation of the great Mr. Thingum (after whom he is named), and otherwise connected with the most illustrious families of the State. His father, Thomas Bob, Esq., is an opulent merchant in Smug. Sept. 15—1 t.

This generous approbation touched me to the heart—the more especially as it emanated from a source so avowedly—so proverbially pure as the *Toad*. The word "balderdash," as applied to the "Oil-of-Bob" of the *Fly*, I considered singularly pungent and appropriate. The words "gem" and "*bijou*," however, used in reference to my composition, struck me as being in some degree feeble. They seemed to me to be deficient in force. They were not sufficiently *prononcés* (as we have it in France).

I had hardly finished reading the *Toad* when a friend placed in my hands a copy of the *Mole*, a daily enjoying high reputation for the keenness of its perception about matters in general, and for the open, honest, above-ground style of its editorials. The *Mole* spoke of the *Lollipop* as follows:—

"We have just received the *Lollipop* for October, and *must* say that never before have we perused any single number of any periodical which afforded us a felicity so supreme. We speak advisedly. The *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, and the *Goosetherumfoodle* must look well to their laurels.

These prints, no doubt, surpass everything in loudness of pretension, but in all other points give us the *Lollipop!* How this celebrated Magazine can sustain its evidently tremendous expenses is more than we can comprehend. To be sure it has a circulation of 300,000; and its subscription list has increased one-half within the last week, but then the sum it disburses monthly for contributions is astoundingly enormous. We have it upon good authority that Mr. Fatquack received no less than sixty-two cents and a half for his late Domestic Nouvelette, the 'Dish-Clout.'

"The contributors to the number before us are Mr. CRAB (the eminent editor), SNOB, Mumblethumb, Fatquack, and others; but, after the inimitable composition of the editor himself, we prefer a diamond-like effusion from the pen of a rising poet who writes over the signature 'Snob'—a *nom-de-guerre* which we predict will one day extinguish the radiance of 'Boz.' 'SNOB,' we learn, is a THINGUM BOB, Esq., sole heir of a wealthy merchant of this city, Thomas Bob, Esq., and a near relative of the distinguished Mr. Thingum. The title of Mr. B.'s admirable poem is the 'Oil-of-Bob'—a somewhat unfortunate name by-the-hye, as some contemptible vagabond connected with the penny press has already disgusted the town with a great deal of drivel upon the same topic. There will be no danger, however, of confounding the compositions. Sept. 15—It.

The generous approbation of so clear-sighted a journal as the *Mole* penetrated my soul with delight. The only objection which occurred to me was, that the terms "contemptible vagabond" might have been better written "*odious and contemptible wretch, villain, and vagabond.*" This would have sounded more gracefully, I think. "Diamond-like," also, was scarcely, it will be admitted, of sufficient intensity to express what the *Mole* evidently *thought* of the brilliancy of the "Oil-of-Bob."

On the same afternoon in which I saw these notices in the *Owl*, the *Toad*, and the *Mole*, I happened to meet with a copy of the *Daddy-Long-Legs*, a periodical proverbial for the extreme extent of its understanding. And it was the *Daddy-Long-Legs* which spoke thus:—

"The *Lollipop!*!! This gorgeous magazine is already before the public for October. The question of pre-eminence is forever put to rest, and hereafter it will be excessively preposterous in the *Hum-Drum*, the *Rowdy-Dow*, or the *Goosetherumfoode* to make any farther spasmodic attempts at competition. These journals may excel the *Lollipop* in outcry, but in all other points give us the *Lollipop!* How this celebrated magazine can sustain its evidently tremendous expenses is past comprehension.

To be sure it has a circulation of precisely half-a-million, and its subscription list has increased seventy-five per cent. within the last couple of days; but then the sums it disburses monthly for contributions are scarcely credible; we are cognizant of the fact that Mademoiselle Cribalittle received no less than eighty-seven cents and a half for her late valuable Revolutionary Tale, entitled 'The York-Town Katy-Did, and the Bunker-Hill Katy-Didn't.'

"The most able papers in the present number are of course those furnished by the editor (the eminent Mr. CRAB), but there are numerous magnificent contributions from such names as SNOB, Mademoiselle Cribalittle, Slyass, Mrs. Fibalittle, Mumblethumb, Mrs. Squibalittle, and last, though not least, Fatquack. The world may well be chalenged to produce so rich a galaxy of genius.

"The poem over the signature 'SNOB' is, we find, attracting universal commendation, and, we are constrained to say, deserves, if possible, even more applause than it has received. The 'Oil-of-Bob' is the title of this masterpiece of eloquence and art. One or two of our readers *may* have a *very* faint, although sufficiently disgusting, recollection of a poem (?) similarly entitled, the perpetration of a miserable penny-a-liner, mendicant, and cut-throat, connected in the capacity of scullion, we believe, with one of the indecent prints about the purlieus of the city; we beg them, for God's sake, not to confound the compositions. The author of the 'Oil-of-Bob' is, we hear, THINGUM BOB, Esq., a gentleman of high genius, and a scholar. 'Snob' is merely a *nom-de-guerre*. Sept. 15—1 t.

I could scarcely restrain my indignation while I perused the concluding portions of this diatribe. It was clear to me that the yea-nay manner—not to say the gentleness—the positive forbearance with which the *Daddy-Long-Legs* spoke of that pig, the editor of the *Gad-Fly*—it was evident to me, I say, that this gentleness of speech could proceed from nothing else than a partiality for the *Fly*—whom it was clearly the intention of the *Daddy-Long-Legs* to elevate into reputation at my expense. Any one, indeed, might perceive, with half an eye, that, had the real design of the *Daddy* been what it wished to appear, it (the *Daddy*) might have expressed itself in terms more direct, more pungent, and altogether more to the purpose. The words "penny-a-liner," "mendicant," "scullion," and "cut-throat" were epithets so intentionally expressive and equivocal, as to be worse than nothing when applied to the author of the very worst stanzas ever

penned by one of the human race. We all know what is meant by “damning with faint praise,” and, on the other hand, who could fail seeing through the covert purpose of the *Daddy*—that of glorifying with feeble abuse?

What the *Daddy* chose to say of the *Fly*, however, was no business of mine. What it said of myself *was*. After the noble manner in which the *Owl*, the *Toad*, the *Mole*, had expressed themselves in respect to my ability, it was rather too much to be coolly spoken of by a thing like the *Daddy-Long-Legs* as merely “a gentleman of high genius and a scholar.” Gentleman! indeed I made up my mind at once, either to get a written apology from the *Daddy-Long-Legs*, or to call it out.

Full of this purpose, I looked about me to find a friend whom I could entrust with a message to his Daddyship, and as the editor of the *Lollipop* had given me marked tokens of regard, I at length concluded to seek his assistance upon the present occasion.

I have never yet been able to account, in a manner satisfactory to my own understanding, for the *very* peculiar countenance and demeanor with which Mr. Crab listened to me, as I unfolded to him my design. He again went through the scene of the bell-rope and cudgel, and did not omit the duck. At one period I thought he really intended to quack. His fit, nevertheless, finally subsided as before, and he began to act and speak in a rational way. He declined bearing the cartel, however, and, in fact, dissuaded me from sending it at all; but was candid enough to admit that the *Daddy-Long-Legs* had been disgracefully in the wrong—more especially in what related to the epithets “gentleman and scholar.”

Towards the end of this interview with Mr. Crab,

who really appeared to take a paternal interest in my welfare, he suggested to me that I might turn an honest penny, and at the same time advance my reputation, by occasionally playing Thomas Hawk for the "Lollipop."

I begged Mr. Crab to inform me who was Mr. Thomas Hawk, and how it was expected that I should play him.

Here Mr. Crab again "made great eyes" (as we say in Germany), but at length, recovering himself from a profound attack of astonishment, he assured me that he employed the words "Thomas Hawk" to avoid the colloquialism Tommy, which was low—but that the true idea was Tommy Hawk or tomahawk—and that by "playing tomahawk" he referred to scalping, brow-beating, and otherwise using-up the herd of poor devil authors.

I assured my patron that, if this was all, I was perfectly resigned to the task of playing Thomas Hawk. Hereupon Mr. Crab desired me to use-up the editor of the *Gad-Fly* forthwith, in the fiercest style within the scope of my ability, and as a specimen of my power. This I did upon the spot, in a review of the original "Oil-of-Bob," occupying thirty-six pages of the *Lollipop*, I found playing Thomas Hawk, indeed, a far less onerous occupation than poetizing; for I went upon *system* altogether, and thus it was easy to do the thing thoroughly and well. My practice was this. I bought auction copies (cheap) of "Lord Brougham's Speeches," "Cobbett's Complete Works," the "New Slang-Syllabus," the "Whole Art of Snubbing," "Prentice's Billingsgate" (folio edition), and "Lewis G. Clarke on Tongue." These works I cut up thoroughly with a curry-comb, and then, throwing the shreds into a sieve, sifted out carefully all that might be thought decent (a mere trifle), reserving the hard phrases, which I threw into a large tin peppercastor

with longitudinal holes, so that an entire sentence could get through without material injury. The mixture was then ready for use. When called upon to play Thomas Hawk, I anointed a sheet of foolscap with the white of a gander's egg ; then shredding the thing to be reviewed as I had previously shredded the books—only with more care, so as to get every word separate—I threw the latter shreds in with the former, screwed on the lid of the castor, gave it a shake, and so dusted out the mixture upon the egged foolscap ; where it stuck. The effect was beautiful to behold. It was captivating. Indeed, the reviews I brought to pass by this simple expedient have never been approached, and were the wonder of the world. At first, through bashfulness—the result of inexperience—I was a little put out by a certain inconsistency—a certain air of the *bizarre* (as we say in France) worn by the composition as a whole. All the phrases did not *fit* (as we say in the Anglo-Saxon). Many were quite awry. Some, even, were upside-down ; and there were none of them which were not in some measure injured in regard to effect by this latter species of accident when it occurred ;—with the exception of Mr. Lewis Clarke's paragraphs, which were so vigorous, and altogether stout, that they seemed not particularly disconcerted by any extreme of position, but looked equally happy and satisfactory whether on their heads or on their heels.

What became of the editor of the *Gad-Fly*, after the publication of my criticism on his "Oil-of-Bob," it is somewhat difficult to determine. The most reasonable conclusion is, that he wept himself to death. At all events, he disappeared instantaneously from the face of the earth, and no man has seen even the ghost of him since.

This matter having been properly accomplished, and the Furies appeased, I grew at once into high favor with Mr. Crab. He took me into his confidence, gave me a permanent situation as Thomas Hawk of the *Lollipop*, and, as for the present he could afford me no salary, allowed me to profit, at discretion, by his advice.

"My dear Thingum," said he to me one day after dinner, "I respect your abilities and love you as a son. You shall be my heir. When I die I will bequeath you the *Lollipop*. In the meantime I will make a man of you—I *will*—provided always that you follow my counsel. The first thing to do is to get rid of the old bore."

"Boar?" said I inquiringly—"pig, eh?—*aper?* (as we say in Latin)—who?—where?"

"Your Father," said he.

"Precisely," I replied,—"pig."

"You have your fortune to make, Thingum," resumed Mr. Crab, "and that governor of yours is a millstone about your neck. We must cut him at once." [Here I took out my knife.] "We must cut him," continued Mr. Crab, "decidedly and forever. He won't do—he *won't*. Upon second thoughts, you had better kick him, or cane him, or something of that kind."

"What do you say," I suggested modestly, "to my kicking him in the first instance, caning him afterwards, and winding up by tweaking his nose?"

Mr. Crab looked at me musingly for some moments, and then answered :

"I think, Mr. Bob, that what you propose would answer sufficiently well—indeed, remarkably well—that is to say, as far as it went—but barbers are exceedingly hard to cut, and I think, upon the whole, that, having

performed upon Thomas Bob the operations you suggest, it would be advisable to blacken with your fists both his eyes, very carefully and thoroughly, to prevent his ever seeing you again in fashionable promenades. After doing this, I really do not perceive that you can do any more. However—it might be just as well to roll him once or twice in the gutter, and then put him in charge of the police. Any time the next morning you can call at the watchhouse and swear an assault."

I was much affected by the kindness of feeling towards me personally which was evinced in this excellent advice of Mr. Crab, and I did not fail to profit by it forthwith. The result was that I got rid of the old bore, and began to feel a little independent and gentleman-like. The want of money, however, was for a few weeks a source of some discomfort; but at length, by carefully putting to use my two eyes, and observing how matters went just in front of my nose, I perceived how the thing was to be brought about. I say "thing"—be it observed—for they tell me the Latin for it is *rem*. By the way, talking of Latin, can any one tell me the meaning of *quocunque*—or what is the meaning of *modo*?

My plan was exceedingly simple. I bought, for a song, a sixteenth of the *Snapping-Turtle*—that was all. The thing was *done* and I put money in my purse. There were some trivial arrangements afterwards, to be sure; but these formed no portion of the plan. They were a consequence—a result. For example, I bought pen, ink, and paper, and put them into furious activity. Having thus completed a magazine article, I gave it, for appellation, "*FOL-LOL, by the author of 'THE OIL-OF-BOB,'*" and enveloped it to the *Goosetherumfoodle*. That journal, however, having pronounced it "twaddle"

in the "Monthly Notices to Correspondents," I re-headed the paper "'Hey-Diddle-Diddle,' by THINGUM BOB, Esq., Author of the Ode on 'The Oil-of-Bob,' and Editor of the *Snapping-Turtle*." With this amendment, I re-enclosed it to the *Goosetherumfoodle*, and, while I awaited a reply, published daily, in the *Turtle*, six columns of what may be termed philosophical and analytical investigation of the literary merits of the *Goosetherumfoodle*, as well as of the personal character of the editor of the *Goosetherumfoodle*. At the end of a week the *Goosetherumfoodle* discovered that it had, by some odd mistake, "confounded a stupid article headed 'Hey-Diddle-Diddle,' and composed by some unknown ignoramus, with a gem of splendid lustre similarly entitled, the work of Thingum Bob, Esq., the celebrated author of 'Oil-of-Bob.'" The *Goosetherumfoodle* deeply regretted this very natural accident," and promised, moreover, an insertion of the *genuine* "Hey-Diddle-Diddle" in the very next number of the magazine.

The fact is, I *thought*—I *really* thought—I thought at the time—I thought *then*—and have no reason for thinking otherwise *now*—that the *Goosetherumfoodle* *did* make a mistake. With the best intentions in the world, I never knew anything that made as many singular mistakes as the *Goosetherumfoodle*. From that day I took a liking to the *Goosetherumfoodle*, and the result was I soon saw into the very depths of its literary merits, and did not fail to expatiate upon them in the *Turtle* whenever a fitting opportunity occurred. And it is to be regarded as a very peculiar coincidence—as one of those positively *remarkable* coincidences—which set a man to serious thinking—that just such a total revolution of opinion—just such entire *bouleversemement* (as we say in

French),—just such thorough *topsiturviness* (if I may be permitted to employ a rather forcible term of the Choc-taws), as happened, *pro* and *con*, between myself on the one part and the “*Goosetherumfoodle* on the other, did actually again happen, in a brief period afterwards, and with precisely similar circumstances, in the case of myself and the *Rowdy-Dow*, and in the case of myself and the *Hum-Drum*.

Thus it was that, by a master-stroke of genius, I at length consummated my triumphs by “putting money in my purse,” and thus may be said really and fairly to have commenced that brilliant and eventful career which rendered me illustrious, and which now enables me to say, with Chateaubriand, “I have made history”—“*J'ai fait l'histoire.*”

I have indeed “made history.” From the bright epoch which I now record, my actions—my works—are the property of mankind. They are familiar to the world. It is, then, needless for me to detail how, soaring rapidly, I fell heir to the *Lollipop*—how I merged this journal in the *Hum-Drum*—how again I made purchase of the *Rowdy-Dow*, thus combining the three periodicals—how, lastly, I effected a bargain for the sole remaining rival, and united all the literature of the country in one magnificent magazine, known everywhere as the

“Rowdy-Dow, Lollipop, Hum-Drum,
and
GOOSETHERUMFOODLE.”

Yes; I have made history. My fame is universal. It extends to the uttermost ends of the earth. You cannot take up a common newspaper in which you shall not see some allusion to the immortal THINGUM BOB. It is Mr.

Thingum Bob said so, and Mr. Thingum Bob wrote this, and Mr. Thingum Bob did that. But I am meek and expire with a humble heart. After all, what is it?—this indescribable something which men will persist in terming “genius?” I agree with Buffon—with Hogarth—it is but *diligence* after all.

Look at *me!*—how I labored—how I toiled—how I wrote! Ye gods, did I *not* write? I knew not the word “ease.” By day I adhered to my desk, and at night, a pale student, I consumed the midnight oil. You should have seen me—you *should*. I leaned to the right. I leaned to the left. I sat forward. I sat backward. I sat upon the end. I sat *tête baisée* (as they have it in the Kickapoo), bowing my head close to the alabaster page. And, through all, I—*wrote*. Through joy and through sorrow, I—*wrote*. Through hunger and through thirst, I—*wrote*. Through good report and ill report, I—*wrote*. Through sunshine and through moonshine, I—*wrote*. *What* I wrote it is unnecessary to say. The *style!*—that was the thing. I caught it from Fat-quack—whizz!—fizz!—and I am giving you a specimen of it now.

HOW TO WRITE A BLACKWOOD ARTICLE.

"In the name of the Prophet—figs!!"

—*Cry of Turkish fig-peddler.*

I presume everybody has heard of me. My name is the Signora Psyche Zenobia. This I know to be a fact. Nobody but my enemies ever calls me Suky Snobbs. I have been assured that Suky is but a vulgar corruption of Psyche, which is good Greek, and means "the soul" (that's me, I'm *all* soul), and sometimes "a butterfly," which latter meaning undoubtedly alludes to my appearance in my new crimson satin dress, with the sky-blue Arabian *mantelet*, and the trimmings of green *agraffas*, and the seven flounces of orange-colored *auriculas*. As for Snobbs—any person who should look at me, would be instantly aware that my name wasn't Snobbs. Miss Tabitha Turnip propagated that report through sheer envy. Tabitha Turnip, indeed! Oh the little wretch! But what can we expect from a turnip? Wonder if she remembers the old adage about "blood out of a turnip, etc." [Mem.—put her in mind of it the first opportunity.] [Mem. again—pull her nose.] Where was I? Ah! I have been assured that Snobbs is a mere corruption of Zenobia, and that Zenobia was a queen—(So am I. Dr. Moneypenny always calls me the Queen of Hearts)—and that Zenobia, as well as Psyche, is good Greek, and that my father was "a Greek," and, that, consequently, I have a right to our patronymic, which is Zenobia, and not by any means,

Snobbs. Nobody but Tabitha Turnip calls me Suky Snobbs, I am the Signora Pysche Zenobia.

As I said before, everybody has heard of me. I am that very Signora Psyche Zenobia so justly celebrated as corresponding secretary to the "*Philadelphia, Regular, Exchange, Tea, Total, Young, Belles, Lettres, Universal, Experimental, Bibliographical, Association, To, Civilize, Humanity.*" Dr. Moneypenny made the title for us, and says he chose it because it sounded big, like an empty rum-puncheon. (A vulgar man, that, sometimes—but he's deep.) We all sign the initials of the society after our names, in the fashion of the R.S.A., Royal Society of Arts—the S.D.U.K., Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, etc., etc. Dr. Money-penny says that S stands for *stale*, and that D.U.K. spells duck (but it don't), and that S.D.U.K. stands for Stale Duck, and not for Lord Brougham's society—but then Dr. Moneypenny is such a queer man that I am never sure when he is telling me the truth. At any rate, we always add to our names the initials P.R.E.T.T.Y.-B.L.U.E.B.A.T.C.H.—that is to say, Philadelphia, Regular, Exchange, Tea, Total, Young, Belles, Lettres, Universal, Experimental, Bibliographical, Association, To, Civilize, Humanity—one letter for each word, which is a decided improvement upon Lord Brougham. Dr. Moneypenny will have it that our initials give our true character—but, for my life, I can't see what he means.

Notwithstanding the good offices of the Doctor, and the strenuous exertions of the association to get itself into notice, it met with no very great success until I joined it. The truth is, members indulged in too flippant a tone of discussion. The papers read every Saturday evening were characterized less by depth than buffoonery. They were all whipped syllabub. There

was no investigation of first causes, first principles. There was no investigation of anything at all. There was no attention paid to that great point, the "fitness of things." In short, there was no fine writing like this. It was all low—very! No profundity, no reading, no metaphysics—nothing which the learned call spirituality, and which the unlearned choose to stigmatize as cant. [Dr. M. says I ought to spell "cant" with a capital K—but I know better.]

When I joined the society it was my endeavor to introduce a better style of thinking and writing, and all the world knows how well I have succeeded. We get up as good papers now in the P. R. E. T. T. Y. B. L. U. E. B. A. T. C. H. as any to be found even in *Blackwood*. I say *Blackwood*, because I have been assured that the finest writing, upon every subject, is to be discovered in the pages of that justly celebrated magazine. We now take it for our model upon all themes, and are getting into rapid notice accordingly. And, after all, it's not so very difficult a matter to compose an article of the genuine *Blackwood* stamp, if one only goes properly about it. Of course, I don't speak of the political articles. Everybody knows how *they* are managed, since Dr. Moneypenny explained it. Mr. Blackwood has a pair of tailor's shears, and three apprentices, who stand by him for orders. One hands him the *Times*, another the *Examiner*, and a third a Gulley's *New Compendium of Slang-Whang*. Mr. B. merely cuts out and intersperses. It is soon done—nothing but *Examiner*, *Slang-Whang*, and *Times*—then *Times*, *Slang-Whang*, and *Examiner*—and then *Times*, *Examiner*, and *Slang-Whang*.

But the chief merit of the magazine lies in its miscellaneous articles; and the best of these come under

the head of what Dr. Moneypenny calls the *bizarries* (whatever that may mean) and what everybody else calls the *intensities*. This is a species of writing which I have long known how to appreciate, although it is only since my late visit to Mr. Blackwood (deputed by the society) that I have been made aware of the exact method of composition. This method is very simple, but not so much so as the politics. Upon my calling at Mr. B.'s, and making known to him the wishes of the society, he received me with great civility, took me into his study, and gave me a clear explanation of the whole process.

"My dear madam," said he, evidently struck with my majestic appearance, for I had on the crimson satin, with the green *agraffas*, and the orange-colored *auriculas*, "My dear madam," said he, "sit down. The matter stands thus. In the first place, your writer of intensities must have very black ink, and a very big pen, with a very blunt nib. And, mark me, Miss Psyche Zenobia!" he continued after a pause, with the most impressive energy and solemnity of manner, "mark me!—that pen—must never be mended! Herein, madam, lies the secret, the soul, of intensity. I assume upon myself to say, that no individual, of however great genius, ever wrote with a good pen,—understand me,—a good article. You may take it for granted, that when manuscript can be read it is never worth reading. This is a leading principle in our faith, to which if you cannot readily assent our conference is at an end."

He paused. But, of course, as I had no wish to put an end to the conference, I assented to a proposition so very obvious, and one, too, of whose truth I had all along been sufficiently aware. He seemed pleased, and went on with his instructions.

"It may appear invidious in me, Miss Psyche,

Zenobia, to refer you to an article, or set of articles, in the way of model or study; yet perhaps I may as well call your attention to a few cases. Let me see. There was ‘The Dead Alive,’ a capital thing!—the record of a gentleman’s sensation when entombed before the breath was out of his body—full of taste, terror, sentiment, metaphysics, and erudition. You would have sworn that the writer had been born and brought up in a coffin. Then we had the ‘Confessions of an Opium-eater’—fine, very fine!—glorious imagination—deep philosophy—acute speculation—plenty of fire and fury, and a good spicing of the decidedly unintelligible. That was a nice bit of flummery, and went down the throats of the people delightfully. They would have it that Coleridge wrote the paper—but not so. It was composed by my pet baboon, Juniper, over a rummer of Hollands and water, ‘hot, without sugar.’” [This I could scarcely have believed had it been anybody but Mr. Blackwood who assured me of it.] “Then there was ‘The Involuntary Experimentalist,’ all about a gentleman who got baked in an oven, and came out alive and well, although certainly done to a turn. And then there was ‘The Diary of a Late Physician,’ where the merit lay in good rant and indifferent Greek—both of them taking things with the public. And then there was ‘The Man in the Bell,’ a paper by-the-bye, Miss Zenobia, which I cannot sufficiently recommend to your attention. It is the history of a young person who goes to sleep under the clapper of a church bell, and is awakened by its tolling for a funeral. The sound drives him mad, and, accordingly, pulling out his tablets, he gives a record of his sensations. Sensations are the great things after all. Should you ever

be drowned or hung, be sure and make a note of your sensations—they will be worth to you ten guineas a sheet. If you wish to write forcibly, Miss Zenobia, pay minute attention to the sensations."

"That I certainly will, Mr. Blackwood," said I.

"Good!" he replied. "I see you are a pupil after my own heart. But I must put you *au fait* to the details necessary in composing what may be denominated a genuine *Blackwood* article of the sensation stamp—the kind which you will understand me to say I consider the best for all purposes.

"The first thing requisite is to get yourself into such a scrape as no one ever got into before. The oven, for instance,—that was a good hit. But if you have no oven or big bell at hand, and if you cannot conveniently tumble out of a balloon, or be swallowed up in an earthquake, or get stuck fast in a chimney, you will have to be contented with simply imagining some similar misadventure. I should prefer, however, that you have the actual fact to bear you out. Nothing so well assists the fancy as an experimental knowledge of the matter in hand. 'Truth is strange,' you know, 'stranger than fiction'—besides being more to the purpose."

Here I assured him I had an excellent pair of garters, and would go and hang myself forthwith.

"Good!" he replied, "do so; although hanging is somewhat hackneyed. Perhaps you might do better. Take a dose of Brandreth's pills, and then give us your sensations. However, my instructions will apply equally well to any variety of misadventure, and in your way home you may easily get knocked on the head, or run over by an omnibus, or bitten by a mad dog, or drowned in a gutter. But to proceed:

"Having determined upon your subject, you must

next consider the tone or manner of your narration. There is the tone didactic, the tone enthusiastic, the tone natural—all commonplace enough. But then there is the tone laconic, or curt, which has lately come much into use. It consists in short sentences. Somehow thus:—Can't be too brief. Can't be too snappish. Always a full stop. And never a paragraph.

“Then there is the tone elevated, diffusive, and interjectional. Some of our best novelists patronize this tone. The words must be all in a whirl like a humming-top, and make a noise very similar, which answers remarkably well instead of meaning. This is the best of all possible styles where the writer is in too great a hurry to think.

“The tone metaphysical is also a good one. If you know any big words, this is your chance for them. Talk of the Ionic and Eleatic schools—of Archytas, Gorgias, and Alemaeon. Say something about objectivity and subjectivity. Be sure and abuse a man named Locke. Turn up your nose at things in general, and when you let slip anything a little *too* absurd, you need not be at the trouble of scratching it out, but just add a foot-note, and say that you are indebted for the above profound observation to the ‘Kritik der reinen Vernunft,’ or to the ‘Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft.’ This will look erudite and—and—and frank.

“There are various other tones of equal celebrity, but I shall mention only two more—the tone transcendental and the tone heterogeneous. In the former the merit consists in seeing into the nature of affairs a very great deal farther than anybody else. This second sight is very efficient when properly managed. A little reading of the ‘Dial’ will carry you a great way. Eschew, in this case, big words; get them as small as possible,

and write them upside down. Look over Channing's poems, and quote what he says about a 'fat little man with a delusive show of Can.' Put in something about the Supernal Oneness. Don't say a syllable about the Infernal Twoness. Above all, study innuendo. Hint everything—assert nothing. If you feel inclined to say 'bread and butter,' do not by any means say it outright. You may say anything and everything *approaching* to 'bread and butter.' You may hint at buckwheat cake, or you may even go so far as to insinuate oatmeal porridge, but if bread and butter be your real meaning, be cautious, my *dear* Miss Psyche, not on any account to say 'bread and butter!' "

I assured him that I should never say it again as long as I lived. He kissed me and continued :

" As for the tone heterogeneous, it is merely a judicious mixture, in equal proportions, of all the other tones in the world, and is consequently made up of everything deep, great, odd, piquant, pertinent, and pretty.

" Let us suppose now you have determined upon your incidents and tone. The most important portion—in fact, the soul of the whole business, is yet to be attended to—I allude to *the filling up*. It is not to be supposed that a lady, or gentleman either, has been leading the life of a book-worm. And yet above all things it is necessary that your article have an air of erudition, or at least afford evidence of extensive general reading. Now I'll put you in the way of accomplishing this point. See here!" [Pulling down some three or four ordinary-looking volumes, and opening them at random.] " By casting your eye down almost any page of any book in the world, you will be able to perceive at once a host of little scraps of either learning or *bel-esprit-ism*, which are the very thing for the

spicing of a *Blackwood* article. You might as well note down a few while I read them to you. I shall make two divisions: first, *Piquant Facts for the Manufacture of Similes*; and second, *Piquant Expressions to be introduced as occasion may require*. Write now!"—and I wrote as he dictated.

"**PIQUANT FACTS FOR SIMILES.** 'There were originally but three Muses—Melete, Mneme, Aœde—meditation, memory, and singing.' You may make a great deal of that little fact if properly worked. You see it is not generally known, and looks *recherché*. You must be careful and give the thing with a downright improviso air.

"Again. 'The river Alpheus passed beneath the sea, and emerged without injury to the purity of its waters.' Rather stale that, to be sure, but if properly dressed and dished up, will look quite as fresh as ever.

"Here is something better. 'The Persian Iris appears to some persons to possess a sweet and very powerful perfume, while to others it is perfectly scentless.' Fine, that, and very delicate! Turn it about a little, and it will do wonders. We'll have something else in the botanical line. There's nothing goes down so well, especially with the help of a little Latin. Write!

"*The Epidendrum Flos Aeris* of Java bears a very beautiful flower, and will live when pulled up by the roots. The natives suspend it by a cord from the ceiling, and enjoy its fragrance for years.' That's capital! That will do for the similes. Now for the Piquant Expressions.

"**PIQUANT EXPRESSIONS.** '*The venerable Chinese novel Ju-Kiao-Li*.' Good! By introducing these few words with dexterity you will evince your intimate acquaintance with the language and literature of the

Chinese. With the aid of this you may possibly get along without either Arabic, or Sanscrit, or Chickasaw. There is no passing muster, however, without Spanish, Italian, German, Latin, and Greek. I must look you out a little specimen of each. Any scrap will answer, because you must depend upon your own ingenuity to make it fit into your article. Now write!

“*Aussi tendre que Zaire*”—as tender as Zaire—French. Alludes to the frequent repetition of the phrase *la tendre Zaire*, in the French tragedy of that name. Properly introduced, will show not only your knowledge of the language, but your general reading and wit. You can say, for instance, that the chicken you were eating (write an article about being choked to death by a chicken-bone) was not altogether *aussi tendre que Zaire*. Write!

‘*Van muerte tan escondida,
Que no te sienta venir,
Porque el placer del morir
No me torne a dar la vida.*’

That’s Spanish—from Miguel de Cervantes. ‘Come quickly, O death! but be sure and don’t let me see you coming, lest the pleasure I shall feel at your appearance should unfortunately bring me back again to life.’ This you may slip in quite à propos when you are struggling in the last agonies with the chicken-bone. Write!

‘*Il pover’ uomo che non sn’e era accorto,
Andava combattendo, ed era morto.*’

That’s Italian, you perceive—from Ariosto. It means that a great hero, in the heat of combat, not perceiving that he had been fairly killed, continued to fight valiantly, dead as he was. The application of this to your own case is obvious—for I trust, Miss Psyche, that

you will not neglect to kick for at least an hour and a half after you have been choked to death by that chicken-bone. Please to write!

'*Und sterb' ich doch, so sterb' ich denn
Durch sie—durch sie !'*

That's German—from Schiller. 'And if I die, at least I die—for thee—for thee!' Here it is clear that you are apostrophising the *cause* of your disaster, the chicken. Indeed what gentleman (or lady either) of sense *wouldn't* die, I should like to know, for a well fattened capon of the right Molucca breed, stuffed with capers and mushrooms, and served up in a salad-bowl, with orange-jellies, *en mosaiques*! Write! (You can get them that way at Tortoni's)—Write, if you please!

"Here is a nice little Latin phrase, and rare too (one can't be too *recherché* or brief in one's Latin, its getting so common), *ignoratio elenchi*. He has committed an *ignoratio elenchi*—that is to say, he has understood the words of your proposition but not the idea. The man was *a fool*, you see. Some poor fellow whom you address while choking with that chicken bone, and who, therefore, didn't precisely understand what you were talking about. Throw the *ignoratio elenchi* in his teeth, and at once you have him annihilated. If he dare to reply, you can tell him from Lucan (here it is) that speeches are mere *anemoneæ verborum*, anemone words. The anemone, with great brilliancy, has no smell. Or, if he begin to bluster, you may be down upon him with *insomnia Jovis*, reveries of Jupiter—a phrase which Silius Italicus (see here!) applies to thoughts pompous and inflated. This will be sure and cut him to the heart. He can do nothing but roll over and die. Will you be kind enough to write?

"In Greek we must have something pretty—from Demosthenes, for example. *Ανηρ ὁ φευγων και παλιν μαχεσεται.* [Aner o pheugon kai palin makesetai.] There is a tolerably good translation of it in Hudibras—

'For he that flies may fight again,
Which he can never do that's slain.'

In a *Blackwood* article nothing makes so fine a show as your Greek. The very letters have an air of profundity about them. Only observe, madam, the astute look of that Epsilon! That Phi ought certainly to be a bishop! Was ever there a smarter fellow than that Omicron? Just twig that Tau! In short, there is nothing like Greek for a genuine sensation-paper. In the present case your application is the most obvious thing in the world. Rap out the sentence with a huge oath, and by way of *ultimatum* at the good-for-nothing dunder-headed villain who couldn't understand your plain English in relation to the chicken-bone. He'll take the hint and be off, you may depend upon it."

These were all the instructions Mr. B. could afford me upon the topic in question, but I felt they would be entirely sufficient. I was, at length, able to write a genuine *Blackwood* article, and determined to do it forthwith. In taking leave of me, Mr. B. made a proposition for the purchase of the paper when written; but as he could offer me only fifty guineas a sheet, I thought it better to let our society have it, than sacrifice it for so paltry a sum. Notwithstanding this niggardly spirit, however, the gentleman showed his consideration for me in all other respects, and indeed treated me with the greatest civility. His parting words made a deep impression upon my heart, and I hope I shall always remember them with gratitude

"My dear Miss Zenobia," he said, while the tears stood in his eyes, "is there *anything* else I can do to promote the success of your laudable undertaking? Let me reflect! It is just possible that you may not be able, so soon as convenient, to—to—get yourself drowned,—or choked with a chicken-bone, or—or hung,—or bitten by a—but stay! Now I think me of it, there are a couple of very excellent bull-dogs in the yard—fine fellows, I assure you—savage, and all that—indeed just the thing for your money—they'll have you eaten up, *auriculas* and all, in less than five minutes (here's my watch!)—and then only think of the sensations! Here! I say—Tom!—Peter!—Dick, you villain!—let out those"—but as I was really in a great hurry, and had not another moment to spare, I was reluctantly forced to expedite my departure, and accordingly took leave *at once*—somewhat more abruptly, I admit, than strict courtesy would have otherwise allowed.

It was my primary object upon quitting Mr. Blackwood to get into some immediate difficulty, pursuant to his advice, and with this view I spent the greater part of the day in wandering about Edinburgh, seeking for desperate adventures—adventures adequate to the intensity of my feelings, and adapted to the vast character of the article I intended to write. In this excursion I was attended by one negro-servant Pompey, and my little lap-dog Diana, that I had brought with me from Philadelphia. It was not, however, until late in the afternoon that I fully succeeded in my arduous undertaking. An important event then happened, of which the following *Blackwood* article, in the tone heterogeneous, is the substance and results.

A PREDICAMENT.

MISS ZENOBIA'S "BLACKWOOD" ARTICLE.

What chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?—COMUS.

It was a quiet and still afternoon when I strolled forth in the goodly city of Edina. The confusion and bustle in the streets were terrible. Men were talking. Women were screaming. Children were choking. Pigs were whistling. Carts they rattled. Bulls they bellowed. Cows they lowed. Horses they neighed. Cats they caterwauled. Dogs they danced. *Danced!* Could it then be possible? *Danced!* Alas, thought I, *my* dancing days are over! Thus it is ever. What a host of gloomy recollections will ever and anon be awakened in the mind of genius and imaginative contemplation, especially of a genius doomed to the everlasting, and eternal, and continual, and, as one might say, the—*continued*—yes, the *continued and continuous*, bitter, harassing, disturbing, and, if I may be allowed the expression, the *very* disturbing influence of the serene, and godlike, and heavenly, and exalting, and elevated, and purifying effect of what may be rightly termed the most enviable, the most *truly* enviable—nay! the most benignly beautiful, the most deliciously ethereal, and, as it were, the most *pretty* (if I may use so bold an expression) *thing* (pardon me, gentle reader!) in the world;—but I am always led away by my feelings. In *such* a mind, I repeat, what a host of recollections are stirred up by a triflē! The dogs danced!

I—I could not! They frisked—I wept. They capered—I sobbed aloud. Touching circumstances! which cannot fail to bring to the recollection of the classical reader that exquisite passage in relation to the fitness of things, which is to be found in the commencement of the third volume of that admirable and venerable Chinese novel, the “*Jo-Go-Slow.*”

In my solitary walk through the city I had two humble but faithful companions. Diana, my poodle! sweetest of creatures! She had a quantity of hair over her one eye, and a blue riband tied fashionably around her neck. Diana was not more than five inches in height, but her head was somewhat bigger than her body, and her tail, being cut off exceedingly close, gave an air of injured innocence to the interesting animal, which rendered her a favorite with all.

And Pompey, my negro!—sweet Pompey! how shall I ever forget thee? I had taken Pompey’s arm. He was three feet in height (I like to be particular), and about seventy, or perhaps eighty years of age. He had bow-legs and was corpulent. His mouth should not be called small, nor his ears short. His teeth, however, were like pearl, and his large full eyes were deliciously white. Nature had endowed him with no neck, and had placed his ankles (as usual with that race) in the middle of the upper portion of the feet. He was clad with a striking simplicity. His sole garments were a stock of nine inches in height, and a nearly-new drab overcoat which had formerly been in the service of the tall, stately, and illustrious Dr. Money-penny. It was a good overcoat. It was well cut. It was well made. The coat was nearly new. Pompey held it up out of the dirt with both hands.

There were three persons in our party, and two of

them have already been the subject of remark. There was a third—that third person was myself. I am the Signora Psyche Zenobia. I am *not* Suky Snobbs. My appearance is commanding. On the memorable occasion of which I speak I was habited in a crimson satin dress, with a sky-blue Arabian mantelet. And the dress had trimmings of greenagraffas, and seven graceful flounces of the orange-colored auricula. I thus formed the third of the party. There was the poodle. There was Pompey. There was myself. We were *three*. Thus it is said there were originally but three Furies—Melty, Nimmy, and Hetty—Meditation, Memory, and Fiddling.

Leaning upon the arm of the gallant Pompey, and attended at a respectful distance by Diana, I proceeded down one of the populous and very pleasant streets of the now deserted Edina. On a sudden there presented itself to view a church—a Gothic cathedral—vast, venerable, and with a tall steeple, which towered into the sky. What madness now possessed me? Why did I rush upon my fate? I was seized with an uncontrollable desire to ascend the giddy pinnacle, and thence survey the immense extent of the city. The door of the cathedral stood invitingly open. My destiny prevailed. I entered the ominous archway. Where then was my guardian angel?—if indeed such angels there be. *If!* Distressing monosyllable! what a world of mystery, and meaning, and doubt, and uncertainty, is there involved in thy two letters! I entered the ominous archway! I entered, and without injury to my orange-colored auriculas, I passed beneath the portal, and emerged within the vestibule. Thus it is said the immense river Alfred passed, unscathed, and unwetted, beneath the sea.

I thought the staircases would never have an end. *Round!* Yes, they went round and up, and round and up, and round and up, until I could not help surmising with the sagacious Pompey, upon whose supporting arm I leaned in all the confidence of early affection—I *could* not help surmising that the upper end of the continuous spiral ladder had been accidentally, or perhaps designedly, removed. I paused for breath, and in the meantime an incident occurred of too momentous a nature in a moral and also in a metaphysical point of view, to be passed over without notice. It appeared to me—indeed I was quite confident of the fact—I could not be mistaken; no! I had, for some moments, carefully and anxiously observed the motions of my Diana; I say that *I could not be* mistaken—Diana *smelt a rat!* At once I called Pompey's attention to the subject, and he—he agreed with me. There was then no longer any reasonable room for doubt. The rat had been smelt—and by Diana. Heavens! shall I ever forget the intense excitement of that moment? Alas! what is the boasted intellect of man? The rat!—it was there—that is to say, it was somewhere. Diana smelt the rat. I—*could not!* Thus it is said the Prussian Isis has for some persons a sweet and very powerful perfume, while to others it is perfectly scentless.

The staircase had been surmounted, and there were now only three or four more upward steps intervening between us and the summit. We still ascended, and now only one step remained. One step! One little, little step! Upon one such little step in the great staircase of human life how vast a sum of human happiness or misery often depends! I thought of myself, then of Pompey, and then of the mysterious and inexplicable destiny which surrounded us. I thought

of Pompey!—alas, I thought of love! I thought of the many false *steps* which have been taken, and may be taken again. I resolved to be more cautious, more reserved. I abandoned the arm of Pompey, and without his assistance surmounted the one remaining step, and gained the chamber of the belfry. I was followed immediately after by my poodle. Pompey alone remained behind. I stood at the head of the staircase, and encouraged him to ascend. He stretched forth to me his hand, and unfortunately in so doing was forced to abandon his firm hold upon the overcoat. Will the gods never cease their persecution? The overcoat it dropped, and with one of his feet Pompey stepped upon the long and trailing skirt of the overcoat. He stumbled and fell—this consequence was inevitable. He fell forwards, and with his accursed head striking me full in the—in the breast, precipitated me headlong, together with himself, upon the hard, filthy, and detestable floor of the belfry. But my revenge was sure, sudden, and complete. Seizing him furiously by the wool with both hands, I tore out a vast quantity of the black, and crisp, and curling material, and tossed it from me with every manifestation of disdain. It fell among the ropes of the belfry and remained. Pompey arose, and said no word. But he regarded me piteously with his large eyes and—sighed. Ye gods—that sigh! It sunk into my heart. And the hair—the wool! Could I have reached that wool I would have bathed it with my tears in testimony of regret. But alas! it was now far beyond my grasp. As it dangled among the cordage of the bell I fancied it still alive. I fancied that it stood on end with indignation. Thus the *happydandy Flos Aeris* of Java bears, it is said, a beautiful flower, which will live when pulled up by the roots. The natives suspend it

by a cord from the ceiling and enjoy its fragrance for years.

Our quarrel was now made up, and we looked about the room for an aperture through which to survey the city of Edina. Windows there were none. The sole light admitted into the gloomy chamber proceeded from a square opening, about a foot in diameter, at a height of about seven feet from the floor. Yet what will the energy of true genius not effect? I resolved to clamber up to this hole. A vast quantity of wheels, pinions, and other cabalistic-looking machinery stood opposite the hole, close to it; and through the hole there passed an iron rod from the machinery. Between the wheels and the wall where the hole lay there was barely room for my body—yet I was desperate, and determined to persevere. I called Pompey to my side.

“ You perceive that aperture, Pompey. I wish to look through it. You will stand here just beneath the hole—so. Now, hold out one of your hands, Pompey, and let me step upon it—thus. Now, the other hand, Pompey, and with its aid I will get upon your shoulders.”

He did everything I wished, and I found, upon getting up, that I could easily pass my head and neck through the aperture. The prospect was sublime. Nothing could be more magnificent. I merely paused a moment to bid Diana behave herself, and assure Pompey that I would be considerate and bear as lightly as possible upon his shoulders. I told him I would be tender of his feelings—*osseus tender que beefsteak*. Having done this justice to my faithful friend, I gave myself up with great zest and enthusiasm to the enjoyment of the scene which so obligingly spread itself out before my eyes.

Upon this subject, however, I shall forbear to dilate. I will not describe the city of Edinburgh. Every one

has been to Edinburgh—the classic Edina. I will confine myself to the momentous details of my own lamentable adventure. Having in some measure satisfied my curiosity in regard to the extent, situation, and general appearance of the city, I had leisure to survey the church in which I was, and the delicate architecture of the steeple. I observed that the aperture through which I had thrust my head was an opening in the dial-plate of a gigantic clock, and must have appeared from the street as a large keyhole, such as we see in the face of French watches. No doubt the true object was to admit the arm of an attendant, to adjust, when necessary, the hands of the clock from within. I observed also, with surprise, the immense size of these hands, the longest of which could not have been less than ten feet in length, and where broadest eight or nine inches in breadth. They were of solid steel, apparently, and their edges appeared to be sharp. Having noticed these particulars, and some others, I again turned my eyes upon the glorious prospect below, and soon became absorbed in contemplation.

From this, after some minutes, I was aroused by the voice of Pompey, who declared he could stand it no longer, and requested that I would be so kind as to come down. This was unreasonable, and I told him so in a speech of some length. He replied, but with an evident misunderstanding of my ideas upon the subject. I accordingly grew angry, and told him in plain words that he was a fool, that he had committed an *ignoramus e-clench-eye*, that his notions were mere *insommary Bovis*, and his words little better than *an ennemycherrybor'cm*. With this he appeared satisfied, and I resumed my contemplations.

It might have been half-an-hour after this altercation

when, as I was deeply absorbed in the heavenly scenery beneath me, I was startled by something very cold which pressed with a gentle pressure upon the back of my neck. It is needless to say that I felt inexpressibly alarmed. I knew that Pompey was beneath my feet, and that Diana was sitting, according to my explicit directions, upon her hind legs in the farthest corner of the room. What could it be? Alas! I but too soon discovered. Turning my head gently to one side, I perceived to my extreme horror, that the huge, glittering, scimitar-like minute hand of the clock had, in the course of its hourly revolution, *descended upon my neck*. There was, I knew, not a second to be lost. I pulled back at once—but it was too late. There was no chance of forcing my head through the mouth of that terrible trap in which it was so fairly caught, and which grew narrower and narrower with a rapidity too horrible to be conceived. The agony of that moment is not to be imagined. I threw up my hands and endeavored with all my strength to force upward the ponderous iron bar. I might as well have tried to lift the cathedral itself. Down, down, down it came, closer and yet closer. I screamed to Pompey for aid; but he said I had hurt his feelings by calling him “an ignorant old squint-eye.” I yelled to Diana; but she only said “bow-wow-wow,” and that “I had told her on no account to stir from the corner.” Thus I had no relief to expect from my associates.

Meantime the ponderous and terrific *Scythe of Time* (for I now discovered the literal import of that classical phrase) had not stopped, nor was it likely to stop, in its career. Down and still down it came. It had already buried its sharp edge a full inch in my flesh, and my sensations grew indistinct and confused. At

one time I fancied myself in Philadelphia with the stately Dr. Money-penny, at another in the back parlor of Mr. Blackwood receiving his invaluable instructions. And then again the sweet recollection of better and earlier times came over me, and I thought of that happy period when the world was not all a desert, and Pompey not altogether cruel.

The ticking of the machinery amused me. *Amused me*, I say, for my sensations now bordered upon perfect happiness, and the most trifling circumstances afforded me pleasure. The eternal *click clack, click clack, click clack*, of the clock was the most melodious of music in my ears, and occasionally even put me in mind of the grateful sermonic harangues of Dr. Ollapod. Then there were the great figures upon the dial-plate—how intelligent, how intellectual they all looked ! And presently they took to dancing the Mazurka, and I think it was the figure V who performed the most to my satisfaction. She was evidently a lady of breeding. None of your swaggerers, and nothing at all indelicate in her motions. She did the pirouette to admiration—whirling round upon her apex. I made an endeavor to hand her a chair, for I saw that she appeared fatigued with her exertions—and it was not until then that I fully perceived my lamentable situation. Lamentable indeed ! The bar had buried itself two inches in my neck. I was aroused to a sense of exquisite pain. I prayed for death, and in the agony of the moment, could not help repeating those exquisite verses of the poet Miguel de Cervantes :

"Vanny Buren, tan escondida
Query no te senty venny
Pork and pleasure, delly morry
Nommy, torny, darry, widdy!"

But now a new horror presented itself, and one indeed sufficient to startle the strongest nerves. My eyes, from the cruel pressure of the machine, were absolutely starting from their sockets. While I was thinking how I should possibly manage without them, one actually tumbled out of my head, and, rolling down the steep side of the steeple, lodged in the rain-gutter which ran along the eaves of the main building. The loss of the eye was not so much as the insolent air of independence and contempt with which it regarded me after it was out. There it lay in the gutter just under my nose, and the airs it gave itself would have been ridiculous had they not been disgusting. Such a winking and blinking was never before seen. This behavior on the part of my eye in the gutter was not only irritating on account of its manifest insolence and shameful ingratitude, but was also exceedingly inconvenient on account of the sympathy which always exists between two eyes of the same head, however far apart. I was forced in a manner to wink and to blink, whether I would or not, in exact concert with the scoundrelly thing that lay just under my nose. I was presently relieved, however, by the dropping out of the other eye. In falling it took the same direction (possibly a concerted plot) as its fellow. Both rolled out of the gutter together, and in truth I was very glad to get rid of them.

The bar was now four inches and a half deep in my neck, and there was only a little bit of skin to cut through. My sensations were those of entire happiness, for I felt that in a few minutes at farthest I should be relieved from my disagreeable situation. And in this expectation I was not at all deceived. At twenty-five minutes past five in the afternoon precisely, the huge minute-hand had proceeded sufficiently far on

its terrible revolution to sever the small remainder of my neck. I was not sorry to see the head which had occasioned me so much embarrassment at length make a final separation from my body. It first rolled down the side of the steeple, then lodged for a few seconds in the gutter, and then made its way with a plunge into the middle of the street.

I will candidly confess that my feelings were now of the most singular—nay, of the most mysterious, the most perplexing and incomprehensible character. My senses were here and there at one and the same moment. With my head I imagined, at one time, that I, the head, was the real Signora Psyche Zenobia—at another I felt convinced that myself, the body, was the proper identity. To clear my ideas upon this topic I felt in my pocket for my snuff-box, but, upon getting it, and endeavoring to apply a pinch of its grateful contents in the ordinary manner, I became immediately aware of my peculiar deficiency, and threw the box at once down to my head. It took a pinch with great satisfaction, and smiled me an acknowledgment in return. Shortly afterwards it made me a speech, which I could hear but indistinctly without ears. I gathered enough, however, to know that it was astonished at my wishing to remain alive under such circumstances. In the concluding sentences it quoted the noble words of Ariosto—

*"Il pover hommy che non sera certy
And have a combat tenty erry morty;"*

thus comparing me to the hero who, in the heat of the combat, not perceiving that he was dead, continued to contest the battle with inextinguishable valor. There was nothing now to prevent my getting down from

my elevation, and I did so. What it was that Pompey saw so *very* peculiar in my appearance I have never yet been able to find out. The fellow opened his mouth from ear to ear, and shut his two eyes as if he were endeavoring to crack nuts between the lids. Finally, throwing off his overcoat, he made one spring for the staircase and disappeared. I hurled after the scoundrel those vehement words of Demosthenes—

“*Andrew O’Phlegethon, you really make haste to fly,*”

and then turned to the darling of my heart, to the one-eyed! the shaggy-haired Diana. Alas! what a horrible vision affronted my eyes! *Was* that a rat I saw skulking into its hole? *Are* these the picked bones of the little angel who has been cruelly devoured by the monster? Ye gods! and what *do* I behold—is that the departed spirit, the shade, the ghost, of my beloved puppy, which I perceive sitting with a grace so melancholy, in the corner? Harken! for she speaks, and, heavens! it is in the German of Schiller—

“*Unt stubby duk, so stubby dun
Duk she! duk she!*”

Alas! and are not her words too true?

“*And if I died, at least I died
For thee—for thee.*”

Sweet creature! she *too* has sacrificed herself in my behalf. Dogless, niggerless, headless, what *now* remains for the unhappy Signora Psyche Zenobia? Alas—*nothing!* I have done.

MYSTIFICATION.

Slid, if these be your "passados" and "montantes," I'll have
none of them.

NED KNOWLES.

The Baron Ritzner von Jung was of a noble Hungarian family, every member of which (at least as far back into antiquity as any certain records extend) was more or less remarkable for talent of some description, the majority for that species of *grotesquerie* in conception of which Tieck, a scion of the house, has given some vivid, although by no means the most vivid exemplifications. My acquaintance with Ritzner commenced at the magnificent Château Jung, into which a train of droll adventures, not to be made public, threw me during the summer months of the year 18—. Here it was I obtained a place in his regard, and here, with somewhat more difficulty, a partial insight into his mental conformation. In later days this insight grew more clear, as the intimacy which had at first permitted it became more close; and when, after three years' separation, we met at G——n, I knew all that it was necessary to know of the character of the Baron Ritzner von Jung.

I remember the buzz of curiosity which his advent excited within the college precincts on the night of the twenty-fifth of June. I remember still more distinctly that, while he was pronounced by all parties at first sight "the most remarkable man in the world," no person made any attempt at accounting for this opinion.

That he was *unique* appeared so undeniable that it was deemed impertinent to inquire wherein the uniuqity consisted. But, letting this matter pass for the present, I will merely observe that, from the first moment of his setting foot within the limits of the university, he began to exercise over the habits, manners, persons, purses, and propensities of the whole community which surrounded him, an influence the most extensive and despotic, yet at the same time the most indefinite and altogether unaccountable. Thus the brief period of his residence at the university forms an era in its annals, and is characterized by all classes of people appertaining to it or its dependencies as "that very extraordinary epoch forming the domination of the Baron Ritzner von Jung."

Upon his advent to G——n he sought me out in my apartments. He was then of no particular age, by which I mean that it was impossible to form a guess respecting his age by any data personally afforded. He might have been fifteen or fifty, and *was* twenty-one years and seven months. He was by no means a handsome man, perhaps the reverse. The contour of his face was somewhat angular and harsh. His forehead was lofty and very fair; his nose a snub; his eyes large, heavy, glassy, and meaningless. About the mouth there was more to be observed. The lips were gently protruded, and rested the one upon the other after such fashion that it is impossible to conceive any, even the most complex, combination of human features conveying so entirely, and so singly, the idea of unmitigated gravity, solemnity and repose.

It will be perceived, no doubt, from what I have already said, that the Baron was one of those human anomalies now and then to be found who make the

science of *mystification* the study and the business of their lives. For this science a peculiar turn of mind gave him instinctively the cue, while his physical appearance afforded him unusual facilities for carrying his projects into effect. I firmly believe that no student at G——n, during that renowned epoch so quaintly termed the domination of the Baron Ritzner von Jung, ever rightly entered into the mystery which overshadowed his character. I truly think that no person at the university, with the exception of myself, ever suspected him to be capable of a joke, verbal or practical. The old bull-dog at the garden-gate would sooner have been accused—the ghost of Heraclitus—or the wig of the Emeritus Professor of Theology. This, too, when it was evident that the most egregious and unpardonable of all conceivable tricks, whimsicalities and buffooneries were brought about, if not directly by him, at least plainly through his intermediate agency or connivance. The beauty, if I may so call it, of his art *mystique* lay in the consummate ability (resulting from an almost intuitive knowledge of human nature, and a most wonderful self-possession), by means of which he never failed to make it appear that the drolleries he was occupied in bringing to a point arose partly in spite, and partly in consequence, of the laudable efforts he was making for their prevention, and for the preservation of the good order and dignity of Alma Mater. The deep, the poignant, the overwhelming mortification, which upon each such failure of his praiseworthy endeavors, would suffuse every lineament of his countenance, left not the slightest room for doubt of his sincerity in the bosoms of even his most skeptical companions. The adroitness, too, was no less worthy of observation, by which he

contrived to shift the sense of the grotesque from the creator to the created—from his own person to the absurdities to which he had given rise. In no instance before that of which I speak, have I known the habitual mystic escape the natural consequence of his manœuvres—an attachment of the ludicrous to his own character and person. Continually enveloped in an atmosphere of whim, my friend appeared to live only for the severities of society, and not even his own household have for a moment associated other ideas than those of the rigid and august with the memory of the Baron Ritzner von Jung.

During the epoch of his residence at G——n it really appeared that the demon of the *dolce far niente* lay like an incubus upon the university. Nothing, at least, was done beyond eating and drinking and making merry. The apartments of the students were converted into so many pot-houses, and there was no pot-house of them all more famous or more frequented than that of the Baron. Our carousals here were many and boisterous and long, never unfruitful of events.

Upon one occasion, we had protracted our sitting until nearly daybreak, and an unusual quantity of wine had been drunk. The company consisted of seven or eight individuals beside the Baron and myself. Most of these were young men of wealth, of high connection, of great family pride, and all alive with an exaggerated sense of honor. They abounded in the most ultra German opinions respecting the *duello*. To these Quixotic notions some recent Parisian publications, backed by three or four desperate and fatal rencontres at G——n, had given new vigor and impulse, and thus the conversation during the greater part of the night had run wild upon the all-engrossing topic of the times. The Baron, who had been unusually silent and abstracted

in the earlier portion of the evening, at length seemed to be aroused from his apathy, took a leading part in the discourse, and dwelt upon the benefits, and more especially upon the beauties of the received code of etiquette in passages of arms, with an ardor, an eloquence, an impressiveness, and an affectionateness of manner, which elicited the warmest enthusiasm from his hearers in general, and absolutely staggered even myself, who well knew him to be at heart a ridiculer of those very points for which he contended, and especially to hold the entire *fanfaronnade* of duelling etiquette in the sovereign contempt which it deserves.

Looking around me during a pause in the Baron's discourse (of which my readers may gather some faint idea when I say that it bore resemblance to the fervid, chanting, monotonous, yet musical, sermonic manner of Coleridge), I perceived symptoms of even more than the general interest in the countenance of one of the party. This gentleman, whom I shall call Hermann, was an original in every respect, except, perhaps, in the single particular that he was a very great fool. He contrived to bear, however, among a particular set at the university a reputation for deep metaphysical thinking, and, I believe, for some logical talent. As a duellist he had acquired great renown, even at G——n. I forget the precise number of victims who had fallen at his hands, but they were many. He was a man of courage, undoubtedly. But it was upon his minute acquaintance with the etiquette of the *duello* and the *nicety* of his sense of honor that he most especially prided himself. These things were a hobby which he rode to the death. To Ritzner, ever upon the look-out for the grotesque, his peculiarities had for a long time past afforded food for mystification. Of this,

however, I was not aware, although, in the present instance, I saw clearly that something of a whimsical nature was upon the *tap is* with my friend, and that Hermann was its special object.

As the former proceeded in his discourse, or rather monologue, I perceived the excitement of the latter momentarily increasing. At length he spoke, offering some objection to a point insisted upon by R., and giving his reasons in detail. To these the Baron replied at length (still maintaining his exaggerated tone of sentiment), and concluding, in what I thought, very bad taste, with a sarcasm and a sneer. The hobby of Hermann now took the bit in his teeth. This I could discern by the studied hair-splitting *farrago* of his rejoinder. His last words I distinctly remember. "Your opinions, allow me to say, Baron von Jung, although in the main correct, are in many nice points discreditable to yourself and to the university of which you are a member. In a few respects, they are even unworthy of serious refutation. I would say more than this, sir, were it not for the fear of giving you offence (here the speaker smiled blandly). I would say, sir, that your opinions are not the opinions to be expected from a gentleman."

As Hermann completed this equivocal sentence all eyes were turned upon the Baron. He became pale, then excessively red, then dropping his pocket-handkerchief stooped to recover it, when I caught a glimpse of his countenance while it could be seen by no one else at the table. It was radiant with the quizzical expression which was its natural character, but which I had never seen it assume except when we were alone together, and when he unbent himself freely. In an instant afterwards he stood erect confronting Hermann, and so total an alteration of countenance in so short a period,

I certainly never saw before. For a moment I even fancied that I had misconceived him, and that he was in sober earnest. He appeared to be stifling with passion, and his face was cadaverously white. For a short time he remained silent, apparently striving to master his emotion. Having at length seemingly succeeded, he reached a decanter which stood near him, saying as he held it firmly clenched, "The language you have thought proper to employ, mein Herr Hermann, in addressing yourself to me, is objectionable in so many particulars, that I have neither temper nor time for specification. That my opinions, however, are not the opinions to be expected from a gentleman, is an observation so directly offensive as to allow me but one line of conduct. Some courtesy, nevertheless, is due to the presencee of this company, and to yourself at this moment as my guest. You will pardon me, therefore, if, upon this consideration, I deviate slightly from the general usage among gentlemen in similar cases of personal affront. You will forgive me for the moderate tax I shall make upon your imagination, and endeavor to consider for an instant the reflection of your person in yonder mirror as the living Herr Hermann himself. This being done, there will be no difficulty whatever. I shall discharge this decanter of wine at your image in yonder mirror, and thus fulfill all the spirit, if not the exact letter, of resentment for your insult, while the necessity of physical violence to your real person will be obviated."

With these words he hurled the decanter, full of wine, against the mirror which hung directly opposite Hermann, striking the reflection of his person with great precision, and, of course, shattering the glass into fragments. The whole company at once started to their feet, and, with the exception of myself and Ritzner, took

their departure. As Hermann went out the Baron whispered me that I should follow him and make an offer of my services. To this I agreed, not knowing precisely what to make of so ridiculous a piece of business.

The duellist accepted my aid with his stiff and *ultra recherché* air, and, taking my arm, led me to his apartment. I could hardly forbear laughing in his face while he proceeded to discuss, with the profoundest gravity, what he termed "the refinedly peculiar character" of the insult he had received. After a tiresome harangue in his ordinary style, he took down from his book-shelves a number of musty volumes on the subject of the *duello*, and entertained me for a long time with their contents, reading aloud, and commenting earnestly as he read. I can just remember the titles of some of the works. There were the "Ordonnance of Philip le Bel on Single Combat;" the "Theatre of Honor," by Favyn, and a treatise "On the Permission of Duels," by Andiguier. He displayed also, with much pomposity, Brantome's "Memoirs of Duels," published at Cologne in 1666, in the types of Elzevir—a precious and unique vellum-paper volume, with a fine margin, and bound by Derôme. But he requested my attention particularly, and with an air of mysterious sagacity, to a thick octavo, written in barbarous Latin, by one Hedelin, a Frenchman, and having the quaint title, "*Duelli Lex scripta et non; aliterque.*" From this he read me one of the drollest chapters in the world concerning "*Injuriae per applicationem, per constructionem et per se,*" about half of which, he averred, was strictly applicable to his own "refinedly peculiar" case, although no one syllable of the whole matter could I understand for the life of me. Having finished the chapter, he closed the book and demanded what I thought necessary to be done. I replied that I

had entire confidence in his superior delicacy of feeling, and would abide by what he proposed. With this answer he seemed flattered, and sat down to write a note to the Baron. It ran thus :—

SIR,—My friend, Mr. P.—, will hand you this note. I find it incumbent upon me to request, at your earliest convenience, an explanation of this evening's occurrences at your chambers. In the event of your declining this request, Mr. P. will be happy to arrange, with any friend whom you may appoint, the steps preliminary to a meeting.—With sentiments of perfect respect, your most humble servant,

JOHANN HERMANN.

To the Baron Ritzner von Jung,

August 18, 18—

Not knowing what better to do, I called upon Ritzner with this epistle. He bowed as I presented it ; then, with a grave countenance, motioned me to a seat. Having perused the cartel, he wrote the following reply, which I carried to Hermann :—

SIR,—Through our common friend, Mr. P., I have received your note of this evening. Upon due reflection I frankly admit the propriety of the explanation you suggest. This being admitted, I still find great difficulty (owing to the *refinedly peculiar* nature of our disagreement, and of the personal affront offered on my part), in so wording what I have to say by way of apology, as to meet all the minute exigencies, and all the variable shadows of the case. I have great reliance, however, on that extreme delicacy of discrimination, in matters appertaining to the rules of etiquette, for which you

have been so long and so pre-eminently distinguished. With perfect certainty, therefore, of being comprehended, I beg leave, in lieu of offering any sentiments of my own, to refer you to the opinions of the Sieur Hedelin, as set forth in the ninth paragraph of the chapter of "*Injuriæ per applicationem, per constructionem et per se,*" in his "*Duelli Lex scripta et non; aliterque.*" The nicety of your discernment in all the matters here treated will be sufficient, I am assured, to convince you *that the mere circumstance of my referring you* to this admirable passage ought to satisfy your request, as a man of honor, for explanation.—With sentiments of profound respect, your most obedient servant,

VON JUNG.

*The Herr Johann Hermann,
August 18, 18—.*

Hermann commenced the perusal of this epistle with a scowl, which, however, was converted into a smile of the most ludicrous self-complacency as he came to the rigmarole about *Injuriæ per applicationem, per constructionem, et per se.* Having finished reading, he begged me, with the blandest of all possible smiles, to be seated, while he made reference to the treatise in question. Turning to the passage specified, he read it with great care to himself, then closed the book, and desired me, in my character of confidential acquaintance, to express to the Baron von Jung his exalted sense of his chivalrous behavior, and, in that of second, to assure him that the explanation offered was of the fullest, the most honorable, and the most unequivocally satisfactory nature.

Somewhat amazed at all this, I made my retreat to the Baron. He seemed to receive Hermann's amicable letter as a matter of course, and after a few words of

general conversation, went to an inner room and brought out the everlasting treatise "*Duelli Lex scripta et non ; aliterque.*" He handed me the volume, and asked me to look over some portion of it. I did so, but to little purpose, not being able to gather the least particle of meaning. He then took the book himself, and read me a chapter aloud. To my surprise, what he read proved to be a most horribly absurd account of a duel between two baboons. He now explained the mystery ; showing that the volume, as it appeared *prima facie*, was written upon the plan of the nonsense verses of Du Bartas ; that is to say, the language was ingeniously framed so as to present to the ear all the outward signs of intelligibility, and even of profundity, while in fact not a shadow of meaning existed. The key to the whole was found in leaving out every second and third word alternately, when there appeared a series of ludicrous quizzes upon a single combat as practiced in modern times.

The Baron afterwards informed me that he had purposely thrown the treatise in Hermann's way two or three weeks before the adventure, and that he was satisfied, from the general tenor of his conversation, that he had studied it with the deepest attention, and firmly believed it to be a work of unusual merit. Upon this hint he proceeded. Hermann would have died a thousand deaths rather than acknowledge his inability to understand anything and everything in the universe that had ever been written about the *duello*.

X-ING A PARAGRAB.

As it is well known that the “wise men” came “from the East,” and as Mr. Toueh-and-go Bullet-head came from the East, it follows that Mr. Bullet-head was a wise man; and if collateral proof of the matter be needed, here we have it—Mr. B. was an editor. Irascibility was his sole foible; for in fact the obstinacy of which men accused him was anything but his *foible*, since he justly considered it his *forte*. It was his strong point—his virtue; and it would have required all the logic of a Brownson to convince him that it was “anything else.”

I have shown that Touch-and-go Bullet-head was a wise man; and the only occasion on which he did not prove infallible was when, abandoning that legitimate home for all wise men, the East, he migrated to the city of the Alexander-the-Great-o-nopolis, or some place of a similar title, out West.

I must do him the justice to say, however, that when he made up his mind finally to settle in that town, it was under the impression that no newspaper, and consequently no editor, existed in that particular section of the country. In establishing the *Tea-Pot*, he expected to have the field all to himself. I feel confident he never would have dreamed of taking up his residence in Alexander-the-Great-o-nopolis, had he been aware that in Alexander-the-Great-o-nopolis there lived a gentleman named John Smith (if I rightly remember),

who, for many years, had there quietly grown fat in editing and publishing the *Alexander-the-Great-o-nopolis Gazette*. It was solely, therefore, on account of having been misinformed, that Mr. Bullet-head found himself in Alex—— suppose we call it “Nopolis,” for short—but, as he *did* find himself there, he determined to keep up his character for obst—for firmness, and remain. So remain he did; and he did more: he unpacked his press, type, etc., etc., rented an office exactly opposite to that of the *Gazette*, and, on the third morning after his arrival, issued the first number of the *Alexan*—that is to say, of the *Nopolis Tea-Pot*: as nearly as I can recollect, this was the name of the new paper.

The leading article, I must admit, was brilliant—not to say severe. It was especially bitter about things in general—and as for the editor of the *Gazette*, he was torn all to pieces in particular. Some of Bullet-head’s remarks were really so fiery that I have always, since that time, been forced to look upon John Smith, who is still alive, in the light of a salamander. I cannot pretend to give *all* the *Tea-Pot’s* paragraphs *verbatim*, but one of them runs thus:

“Oh, yes! Oh, we perceive! Oh, no doubt! The editor over the way is a genius—Oh, my! Oh, goodness gracious!—what *is* this world coming to? *Oh, tempora! Oh, Moses!*”

A philippic at once so caustic and so classical alighted like a bombshell among the hitherto peaceful citizens of Nopolis. Groups of excited individuals gathered at the corners of the streets. Every one awaited with heartfelt anxiety the reply of the dignified Smith. Next morning it appeared as follows:—

“We quote from the *Tea-Pot* of yesterday the subjoined

paragraph:—‘*Oh*, yes! *Oh*, we perceive! *Oh*, no doubt! *Oh*, my! *Oh*, goodness! *Oh*, tempora! *Oh*, Moses!’ Why, the fellow is all O! That accounts for his reasoning in a circle, and explains why there is neither beginning nor end to him, nor to anything that he says. We really do not believe the vagabond can write a word that hasn’t an O in it. Wonder if this O-ing is a habit of his? By-the-bye, he came away from Down-East in a great hurry. Wonder if he *O*’s as much there as he does here? ‘*O*! it is pitiful.’”

The indignation of Mr. Bullet-head at these scandalous insinuations, I shall not attempt to describe. On the eel-skinning principle, however, he did not seem to be so much incensed at the attack upon his integrity as one might have imagined. It was the sneer at his *style* that drove him to desperation. What!—*he*, Touch-and-go Bullet-head!—not able to write a word without an O in it! He would soon let the jackanapes see that he was mistaken. Yes! he would let him see how *much* he was mistaken, the puppy! He, Touch-and-go Bullet-head, of Frogpondium, would let Mr. John Smith perceive that he, Bullet-head, could indite if it so pleased him, a whole paragraph—ay! a whole article—in which that contemptible vowel should not *once*—not even *once*—make its appearance. But no;—that would be yielding a point to the said John Smith. *He*, Bullet-head, would make *no* alteration in his style to suit the caprices of any Mr. Smith in Christendom. Perish so vile a thought! The O for ever! He would persist in the O. He would be as O-wy as O-wy could be.

Burning with the chivalry of this determination, the great Touch-and-go, in the next *Tea-Pot* came out merely with this simple but resolute paragraph, in reference to this unhappy affair:—

"The editor of the *Tea-Pot* has the *honor* of advising the editor of the *Gazette*, that he (the *Tea-Pot*) will take an opportunity in to-morrow morning's paper of convincing him (the *Gazette*) that he (the *Tea-Pot*) both can and will be *his own master* as regards style—he (the *Tea-Pot*) intending to show him (the *Gazette*) the supreme and indeed the withering contempt with which the criticism of him (the *Gazette*) inspires the independent bosom of him (the *Tea-Pot*), by composing for the especial gratification (?) of him (the *Gazette*) a leading article of some extent in which the beautiful vowel—the Emblem of Eternity—yet so offensive to the hyper-exquisite delicacy of him (the *Gazette*), shall most certainly *not be avoided* by his (the *Gazette's*) most obedient, humble servant, the *Tea-Pot*. 'So much for Buckingham!'"

In fulfillment of the awful threat thus darkly intimated rather than decidedly enunciated, the great Bullet-head, turning a deaf ear to all entreaties for "copy," and simply requesting his foreman to "go to the d—l," when he (the foreman) assured him (the *Tea-Pot!*) that it was high time to "go to press;" turning a deaf ear to everything, I say, the Great Bullet-head sat up until daybreak, consuming the midnight oil, and absorbed in the composition of the really unparalleled paragraph which follows:—

"So, ho, John! how now? Told you so, you know. Don't crow another time before you're out of the woods! Does your mother *know* you're out? Oh, no, no!—so go home at once now, John, to your odious old woods of Concord! Go home to your woods, old owl,—go! You won't? Oh, poh, poh, John, don't do so! You've *got* to go, you know! so go at once, and don't go slow; for nobody owns you here, you know. Oh,

John, John, if you *don't* go, you're no *homo*—no! You're only a fowl, an owl; a cow, a sow; a doll, a poll; a poor old good-for-nothing-to-nobody, log, dog, hog, or frog, come out of a Concord bog. Cool, now—cool! *Do* be cool, you fool! None of your crowing, old cock! Don't frown so—don't. Don't hollo, nor howl, nor growl, nor bow-wow-wow! Good Lord, John, how you *do* look! Told you so, you know—but stop rolling your goose of an old poll about so, and go and drown your sorrows in a bowl!"

Exhausted, very naturally, by so stupendous an effort, the great Touch-and-go could attend to nothing further that night. Firmly, composedly, yet with an air of conscious power, he handed his MS. to the devil in waiting, and then, walking leisurely home, retired with ineffable dignity to bed.

Meantime the devil to whom the copy was entrusted ran up-stairs to his "case" in an unutterable hurry, and forthwith made a commencement at "setting" the MS. "up."

In the first place, of course,—as the opening word was "So"—he made a plunge into the capital S hole, and came out in triumph with a capital S. Elated by this success, he immediately threw himself upon the little *o* box with a blindfold impetuosity—but who shall describe his horror when his fingers came up without the anticipated letter in their clutch? Who shall paint his astonishment and rage at perceiving, as he rubbed his knuckles, that he had been only thumping them to no purpose against the bottom of an *empty* box. Not a single little *o* was in the little *o* hole; and glancing fearfully at the capital O partition, he found *that*, to his extreme terror, in a precisely similar predicament. Awe-stricken, his first impulse was to rush to the foreman.

"Sir!" said he, gasping for breath, "I can't never set up nothing without no o's."

"What do you mean by that?" growled the foreman, who was in a very ill humor at being kept up so late.

"Why, sir, there bean't an *o* in the office, neither a big un nor a little un!"

"What—what the d—l has become of all that were in the case?"

"I don't know, sir," said the boy, "but one of them ere *G'zette* devils is bin prowling 'bout here all night, and I spect *he's* gone and cabbaged 'em every one."

"Dod rot him! I haven't a doubt of it," replied the foreman, getting purple with rage—"but I tell you what you do, Bob, that's a good boy—you go over the first chance you get and hook every one of their i's and (d—n them!) their izzards."

"Jist so," replied Bob, with a wink and a frown—"I'll be into 'em, I'll let 'em know a thing or two; but in de meantime, that 'ere paragrab? *Mus'* go in to-night, you know—else there'll be the d—l to pay, and"—

"And not a *bit* of pitch hot," interrupted the foreman, with a deep sigh and an emphasis on the "bit." "Is it a *very* long paragrab, Bob?"

"Shouldn't call it a *wery* long paragrab," said Bob.

"Ah, well then! do the best you can with it! we *must* get to press," said the foreman, who was over head and ears in work; "just stick in some other letter for *o*, nobody's going to read the fellow's trash anyhow."

"*Wery* well," replied Bob, "here goes it!" and off he hurried to his case; muttering as he went—"Con-siddeble vell, them 'ere expressions, perticcler for a man as dosen't swar. So I's to gouge out all their eyes,

eh? and d—n all their gizzards! Vell! this here's the chap as is jist able *for* to do it.” The fact is, that although Bob was but twelve years old and four feet high, he was equal to any amount of fight, in a small way.

The exigency here described is by no means of rare occurrence in printing-offices; and I cannot tell how to account for it, but the fact is indisputable, that when the exigency *does* occur, it almost always happens that *x* is adopted as a substitute for the letter deficient. The true reason, perhaps, is that *x* is rather the most superabundant letter in the cases, or at least *was* so in old times,—long enough to render the substitution in question an habitual thing with printers. As for Bob, he would have considered it heretical to employ any other character in a case of this kind than the *x* to which he had been accustomed.

“I *shell* have to *x* this 'ere paragrab,” said he to himself, as he read it over in astonishment, “but it's jest about the awfullest *o-wy* paragrab I ever *did* see:” so *x* it he did, unflinchingly, and to press it went *x-ed*.

Next morning the population of Nopolis were taken all back by reading, in the *Tea-pot*, the following extraordinary leader:

“Sx hx, Jxhn! hxw nxw? Txld yxu sx, yxu knxw. Dxn't crxw anxther time befxre yxu're xut xf the wxxds! Dxes yxur mxther *knxw* yxu're xut? Xh, nx, nx!—sx gx hxme at xnee nxw, Jxhn, tx yxur xdixus xld wxxds xf Cxnexrd! Gx hxme tx yxur wxxds, xld xwl,—gx! Yxu wxn't? Xh, pxh, pxh, Jxhn, dxn't dx sx! Yxu've *gxt* tx gx, yxu knxw! sx gx at xnee, and dxn't gx slxw; fxr nxbx dy xwns yxu here, yxu knxw. Xh, Jxhn, Jxhn, if yxu *dxn't* gx, yxu're nx *hxmx*—nx! Yxu're xnlly a fxwl, an xwl; a exw, a sww; a dxll, a pllx; a pxxr xld gxxd-fxr-

nxthing-tx-nxbxdy, lxg, dxg, hgx, xr frxg, cxme xut xf a Cxnexrd bxg. Cxxl, nxw—cxxx! Dx be cxxx, yxu fxxx! Nxne xf yxur crxwing, xld cxck! Dxn't frxwn sx—dxn't! Dxn't hxllx, nxr hxwl, nxr grxwl, nxr bxw-wxw-wxw! Gxxd Lxrd, Jxhn, hwx yxu dx lxxk! Txld yxu sx, yxu knxw, but stxp rxlling yxur gxxse xf an xld pxll abxut sx, and gx and drxwn yxursxrrxws in a bxwl!"

The uproar occasioned by this mystical and cabalistical article is not to be conceived. The first definite idea entertained by the populace was that some diabolical treason lay concealed in the hieroglyphics; and there was a general rush to Bullet-head's residence for the purpose of riding him on a rail, but that gentleman was nowhere to be found. He had vanished, no one could tell how; and not even the ghost of him has ever been seen since.

Unable to discover its legitimate object, the popular fury at length subsided, leaving behind it by way of sediment quite a medley of opinion about this unhappy affair.

One gentleman thought the whole an X-ellent joke.

Another said that, indeed, Bullet-head had shown much X-uberance of fancy.

A third admitted him X-entric, but no more.

A fourth could only suppose it the Yankee's design to X-press, in a general way, his X-asperation.

"Say, rather, to set an X-ample to posterity," suggested a fifth. That Bullet-head had been driven to an X-tremity was clear to all; and in fact since *that* editor could not be found there was some talk about lynching the other one.

The more common conclusion, however, was that the affair was simply X-traordinary and in-X-plicable. Even the town mathematician confessed that he could

make nothing of so dark a problem. X, everybody knew, was an unknown quantity ; but in this case (as he properly observed) there was an unknown quantity of X.

The opinion of Bob the devil (who kept dark about his having "X-ed the paragrab") did not meet with so much attention as I think it deserved, although it was very openly and very fearlessly expressed. He said that, for his part, he had no doubt about the matter at all, that it was a clear case, that Mr. Bullet-head never *could* be persvaded fur to drink like other folks, but vas continually a-swigging o' that ere blessed XXX ale, and as a naiteral consekvence, it just puffed him up savage, and made him X (cross) in the X-treme.

DIDDLING

CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE EXACT SCIENCES.

Hey, diddle diddle,
The cat and the fiddle.

Since the world began there have been two Jeremys. The one wrote a Jeremiad about usury, and was called Jeremy Bentham. He had been much admired by Mr. John Neal, and was a great man in a small way. The other gave name to the most important of the Exact Sciences, and was a great man in a *great* way—I may say, indeed, in the very greatest of ways.

Diddling—or the abstract idea conveyed by the verb to diddle—is sufficiently well understood. Yet the fact, the deed, the thing *diddling*, is somewhat difficult to define. We may get, however, at a tolerably distinct conception of the matter in hand, by defining—not the thing diddling in itself—but man, as an animal that diddles. Had Plato but hit upon this, he would have been spared the affront of the picked chicken.

Very pertinently it was demanded of Plato why a picked chicken, which was clearly a “biqued without feathers,” was not, according to his own definition, a man? But I am not to be bothered by any similar query. Man is an animal that diddles, and there is *no* animal that diddles *but* man. It will take an entire hen-coop of picked chickens to get over that.

What constitutes the essence, the nature, the principle of diddling is, in fact, peculiar to the class of creatures that wear coats and pantaloons. A crow thieves; a fox cheats; a weasel outwits; a man diddles. To diddle is his destiny. "Man was made to mourn," says the poet. But not so—he was made to diddle. This is his aim—his object—his *end*. And for this reason when a man's diddled we say he's "*done*."

Diddling, rightly considered, is a compound, of which the ingredients are minuteness, interest, perseverance, ingenuity, audacity, *nonchalance*, originality, impertinence, and *grin*.

Minuteness.—Your diddler is minute. His operations are upon a small scale. His business is retail, for cash, or approved paper at sight. Should he ever be tempted into magnificent speculation, he then at once loses his distinctive features, and becomes what we term "*financier*." This latter word conveys the diddling idea in every respect except that of magnitude. A diddler may thus be regarded as a banker *in petto*—a "*financial operation*," as a diddle at Brobdingnag. The one is to the other as Homer to "*Flaccus*"—as a mastodon to a mouse—as the tail of a comet to that of a pig.

Interest.—Your diddler is guided by self-interest. He scorns to diddle for the mere *sake* of the diddle. He has an object in view—his pocket—and yours. He regards always the main chance. He looks to Number One. You are Number Two, and must look to yourself.

Perseverance.—Your diddler perseveres. He is not readily discouraged. Should even the banks break, he cares nothing about it. He steadily pursues his end, and,

Ul canis a curio nunquam absterrebitur uncto,

so he never lets go of his game.

Ingenuity.—Your diddler is ingenious. He has constructiveness large. He understands plot. He invents and circumvents. Were he not Alexander, he would be Diogenes. Were he not a diddler, he would be a maker of patent rat traps, or an angler for trout.

Audacity.—Your diddler is audacious—he is a bold man. He carries the war into Africa. He conquers all by assault. He would not fear the daggers of the Frei Herren. With a little more prudence Dick Turpin would have made a good diddler; with a trifle less blarney, Daniel O'Connell; with a pound or two more brains, Charles the Twelfth.

Nonchalance.—Your diddler is *nonchalant*. He is not at all nervous. He never *had* any nerves. He is never seduced into a flurry. He is never put out—unless put out of doors. He is cool—cool as a cucumber. He is calm—“calm as a smile from Lady Bury.” He is easy—easy as an old glove, or the damsels of ancient Baiæ.

Originality.—Your diddler is original—conscientiously so. His thoughts are his own. He would scorn to employ those of another. A stale trick is his aversion. He would return a purse, I am sure, upon discovering that he had obtained it by an unoriginal diddle.

Impertinence.—Your diddler is impertinent. He swaggers. He sets his arms akimbo. He thrusts his hands in his trousers' pockets. He sneers in your face. He treads on your corns. He eats your dinner, he drinks your wine, he borrows your money, he pulls your nose, he kicks your poodle, and he kisses your wife.

Grin.—Your *true* diddler winds up all with a grin. But this nobody sees but himself. He grins when his daily work is done—when his allotted labors are accomplished—at night in his own closet, and altogether for his own private entertainment. He goes home.

He locks his door. He divests himself of his clothes. He puts out his candle. He gets into bed. He places his head upon the pillow. All this done, and your diddler *grins*. This is no hypothesis. It is a matter of course. I reason *a priori*, and a diddle would be *no* diddle without a grin.

The origin of the diddle is referable to the infancy of the human race. Perhaps the first diddler was Adam. At all events, we can trace the science back to a very remote period of antiquity. The moderns, however, have brought it to a perfection never dreamed of by our thick-headed progenitors. Without pausing to speak of the "old saws," therefore, I shall content myself with a compendious account of some of the more "modern instances."

A very good diddle is this. A housekeeper in want of a sofa, for instance, is seen to go in and out of several cabinet warehouses. At length she arrives at one offering an excellent variety. She is accosted, and invited to enter, by a polite and voluble individual at the door. She finds a sofa well adapted to her views, and upon inquiring the price, is surprised and delighted to hear a sum named at least twenty per cent lower than her expectations. She hastens to make the purchase, gets a bill and receipt, leaves her address, with a request that the article be sent home as speedily as possible, and retires amid a profusion of bows from the shopkeeper. The night arrives, and no sofa. The next day passes, and still none. A servant is sent to make inquiry about the delay. The whole transaction is denied. No sofa has been sold—no money received—except by the diddler, who played shopkeeper for the nonce.

Our cabinet warehouses are left entirely unattended, and thus afford every facility for a trick of this kind.

Visitors enter, look at furniture, and depart unheeded and unseen. Should any one wish to purchase or to inquire the price of an article, a bell is at hand, and this is considered amply sufficient.

Again, quite a respectable diddle is this. A well-dressed individual enters a shop; makes a purchase to the value of a dollar; finds, much to his vexation, that he has left his pocket-book in another coat pocket; and so says to the shopkeeper—"My dear sir, never mind!—just oblige me, will you, by sending the bundle home? But stay! I really believe that I have nothing less than a five-dollar bill even *there*. However, you can send four dollars in change *with* the bundle, you know." "Very good, sir," replies the shopkeeper, who entertains at once a lofty opinion of the high-mindedness of his customer. "I know fellows," he says to himself, "who would just have put the goods under their arm, and walked off with a promise to call and pay the dollar as they came by in the afternoon."

A boy is sent with the parcel and change. On the route, quite accidentally, he is met by the purchaser, who exclaims :

"Ah! this is my bundle, I see—I thought you had been home with it long ago. Well, go on! My wife, Mrs. Trotter, will give you the five dollars—I left instructions with her to that effect. The change you might as well give to *me*—I shall want some silver for the post-office. Very good! One, two, is this a good quarter?—three, four—quite right! Say to Mrs. Trotter that you met me, and be sure now and *do* not loiter on the way."

The boy doesn't loiter at all—but he is a very long time in getting back from his errand—for no lady of the precise name of Mrs. Trotter is to be discovered. He

consoles himself, however, that he has not been such a fool as to leave the goods without the money, and re-entering his shop with a self-satisfied air, feels sensibly hurt and indignant when his master asks him what has become of the change.

A very simple diddle, indeed, is this. The captain of a ship which is about to sail is presented by an official-looking person with an unusually moderate bill of city charges. Glad to get off so easily, and confused by a hundred duties pressing upon him all at once, he discharges the claim forthwith. In about fifteen minutes, another and less reasonable bill is handed him by one who soon makes it evident that the first collector was a diddler, and the original collection a diddle.

And here, too, is a somewhat similar thing. A steamboat is casting loose from the wharf. A traveler, portmanteau in hand, is discovered running towards the wharf at full speed. Suddenly he makes a dead halt, stoops and picks up something from the ground in a very agitated manner. It is a pocket-book, and—"Has any gentleman lost a pocket-book?" he cries. No one can say that he has exactly lost a pocket-book; but a great excitement ensues, when the treasure-trove is found to be of value. The boat, however, must not be detained.

"Time and tide wait for no man," says the captain.

"For God's sake, stay only a few minutes," says the finder of the book—"the true claimant will presently appear."

"Can't wait!" replies the man in authority; "cast off there, d'ye hear?"

"What *am I* to do?" asks the finder, in great tribulation. "I am about to leave the country for some years, and I cannot conscientiously retain this large amount in

my possession. I beg your pardon, sir" [here he addresses a gentleman on shore], "but you have the air of an honest man. *Will* you confer upon me the favor of taking charge of this pocket-book—I *know* I can trust you—and of advertising it? The notes, you see, amount to a very considerable sum. The owner will, no doubt, insist upon rewarding you for your trouble—"

"*Me!*—no, *you!*—it was *you* who found the book."

"Well, if you *must* have it so—I will take a small reward—just to satisfy your scruples. Let me see—why, these notes are all hundreds—bless my soul! a hundred is too much to take—fifty would be quite enough, I am sure—"

"Cast off there!" says the captain.

"But then I have no change for a hundred, and upon the whole, *you* had better—"

"Cast off there!" says the captain.

"Never mind!" cries the gentleman on shore, who has been examining his own pocket-book for the last minute or so—"never mind! I can fix it—here is a fifty on the Bank of North America—throw me the book."

And the over-conscientious finder takes the fifty with marked reluctance, and throws the gentleman the book, as desired, while the steamboat fumes and fizzes on her way. In about half an hour after her departure the "large amount" is seen to be a "counterfeit presentment," and the whole thing a capital diddle.

A bold diddle is this. A camp-meeting, or something similar, is to be held at a certain spot which is accessible only by means of a free bridge. A diddler stations himself upon this bridge, respectfully informs all passers-by of the new county law which establishes a toll of one cent for foot-passengers, two for horses and donkeys, and so forth, and so forth. Some

grumble, but all submit, and the diddler goes home a wealthier man by some fifty or sixty dollars, well earned. This taking a toll from a great crowd of people is an excessively troublesome thing.

A neat diddle is this. A friend holds one of the diddler's promises to pay, filled up and signed in due form, upon the ordinary blanks printed in red ink. The diddler purchases one or two dozen of these blanks and every day dips one of them in his soup, makes his dog jump for it, and finally gives it to him as a *bonne bouche*. The note arriving at maturity, the diddler, with the diddler's dog, calls upon the friend, and the promise to pay is made the topic of discussion. The friend produces it from his *escriatoire*, and is in the act of reaching it to the diddler, when up jumps the diddler's dog, and devours it forthwith. The diddler is not only surprised, but vexed and incensed at the absurd behavior of his dog, and expresses his entire readiness to cancel the obligation at any moment when the evidence of the obligation shall be forthcoming.

A very minute diddle is this. A lady is insulted in the street by a diddler's accomplice. The diddler himself flies to her assistance, and giving his friend a comfortable thrashing, insists upon attending the lady to her own door. He bows, with his hand upon his heart, and most respectfully bids her adieu. She entreats him, as her deliverer, to walk in and be introduced to her big brother and her papa. With a sigh he declines to do so. "Is there no way, then, sir," she murmurs, "in which I may be permitted to testify my gratitude?"

"Why, yes, madam, there is. Will you be kind enough to lend me a couple of shillings?"

In the first excitement of the moment the lady decides upon fainting outright. Upon second thought, however,

she opens her purse-strings and delivers the specie. Now this, I say, is a diddle minute—for one entire moiety of the sum borrowed has to be paid to the gentleman who had the trouble of performing the insult, and who had then to stand still and be thrashed for performing it.

Rather a small, but still a scientific diddle is this. The diddler approaches the bar of a tavern, and demands a couple of twists of tobacco. These are handed to him, when, having slightly examined them, he says:

“I don’t much like this tobacco. Here, take it back, and give me a glass of brandy-and-water in its place.”

The brandy-and-water is furnished and imbibed, and the diddler makes his way to the door. But the voice of the tavern-keeper arrests him.

“I believe, sir, you have forgotten to pay for your brandy-and-water.”

“Pay for my brandy-and-water!—didn’t I give you the tobacco for the brandy-and-water? What more would you have?”

“But, sir, if you please, I don’t remember that you paid for the tobacco.”

“What do you mean by that, you scoundrel?—Didn’t I give you back your tobacco? Isn’t *that* your tobacco lying *there*? Do you expect me to pay for what I did not take?”

“But, sir,” says the publican, now rather at a loss what to say, “but, sir—”

“But me no buts, sir,” interrupts the diddler, apparently in very high dudgeon, and slamming the door after him as he makes his escape.—“But me no buts, sir, and none of your tricks upon travelers.”

Here again is a very clever diddle, of which the simplicity is not its least recommendation. A purse

or pocket-book, being really lost, the loser inserts in one of the daily papers of a large city a fully descriptive advertisement.

Whereupon our diddler copies the *facts* of this advertisement, with a change of heading, of general phraseology, and *address*. The original, for instance, is long and verbose, is headed "A Pocket-book Lost!" and requires the treasure, when found, to be left at No. 1 Tom Street. The copy is brief, and being headed with "Lost" only, indicates No. 2 Dick, or No. 3 Harry Street, as the locality at which the owner can be seen. Moreover, it is inserted in at least five or six of the daily papers of the day, while in point of time it makes its appearance only a few hours after the original. Should it be read by the loser of the purse, he would hardly suspect it to have any reference to his own misfortune. But, of course, the chances are five or six to one that the finder will repair to the address given by the diddler, rather than to that pointed out by the rightful proprietor. The former pays the reward, pockets the treasure and decamps.

Quite an analogous diddle is this. A lady of *ton* has dropped, somewhere in the street, a diamond ring of very unusual value. For its recovery she offers some forty or fifty dollars reward—giving in her advertisement a very minute description of the gem and of its settings, and declaring that, upon its restoration to No. so and so, in such and such Avenue, the reward will be paid *instantly*, without a single question being asked. During the lady's absence from home, a day or two afterwards, a ring is heard at the door of No. so and so, in such and such Avenue; a servant appears; the lady of the house is asked for, and is declared to be out, at which astounding information the visitor expresses the

most poignant regret. His business is of importance and concerns the lady herself. In fact, he had the good fortune to find her diamond ring. But perhaps it would be as well that he should call again. "By no means!" says the servant; and "By no means!" say the lady's sister and the lady's sister-in-law, who are summoned forthwith. The ring is clamorously identified, the reward is paid, and the finder nearly thrust out of doors. The lady returns, and expresses some little dissatisfaction with her sister and sister-in-law, because they happen to have paid forty or fifty dollars for a *facsimile* of her diamond ring—a *facsimile* made out of real pinchbeck and unquestionable paste.

But as there is really no end to diddling, so there would be none to this essay, were I even to hint at half the variations or inflections of which this science is susceptible. I must bring this paper, perforce, to a conclusion, and this I cannot do better than by a summary notice of a very decent, but rather elaborate diddle of which our own city was made the theatre not very long ago, and which was subsequently repeated with success in other still more verdant localities of the Union. A middle-aged gentleman arrives in town from parts unknown. He is remarkably precise, cautious, staid, and deliberate in his demeanor. His dress is scrupulously neat, but plain, unostentatious. He wears a white cravat, an ample waistcoat, made with an eye to comfort alone; thick-soled cozy-looking shoes, and pantaloons without straps. He has the whole air, in fact, of your well-to-do, sober-sided, exact and respectable "man of business," *par excellence*—one of the stern and outwardly hard, internally soft, sort of people that we see in the crack high comedies—fellows whose words are so many bonds, and who

are noted for giving away guineas in charity with the one hand, while in the way of mere bargain they exact the uttermost fraction of a farthing with the other.

He makes much ado before he can get suited with a boarding-house. He dislikes children. He has been accustomed to quiet. His habits are methodical—and then he would prefer getting into a private and respectable small family, piously inclined. Terms, however, are no object—only he must insist upon settling his bill on the first of every month (it is now the second), and begs his landlady, when he finally obtains one to his mind, *not* on any account to forget his instructions upon this point, but to send in a bill *and* receipt precisely at ten o'clock on the *first* day of every month, and under no circumstances to put it off to the second.

These arrangements made, our man of business rents an office in a reputable rather than in a fashionable quarter of the town. There is nothing he more despises than pretence. “Where there is much show,” he says, “there is seldom anything very solid behind”—an observation which so profoundly impresses his landlady’s fancy that she makes a pencil memorandum of it forthwith in her great Family Bible, on the broad margin of the Proverbs of Solomon.

The next step is to advertise, after some such fashion as this, in the principal business sixpennies of this city—the pennies are eschewed as not “respectable” and as demanding payment for all advertisements in advance. Our man of business holds it as a point of his faith that work should never be paid for until done.

WANTED.—The advertisers, being about to commence extensive business operations in this city, will require the services of three or four intelligent and competent clerks, to whom a liberal salary will be paid. The very

best recommendations, not so much for capacity as for integrity, will be expected. Indeed as the duties to be performed involve high responsibilities, and large amounts of money must necessarily pass through the hands of those engaged, it is deemed advisable to demand a deposit of fifty dollars from each clerk employed. No person need apply, therefore, who is not prepared to leave this sum in the possession of the advertisers, and who cannot furnish the most satisfactory testimonials of morality. Young gentlemen piously inclined will be preferred. Application should be made between the hours of ten and eleven a. m., and four and five p. m., of Messrs.

BOGS, HOGS, LOGS, FROGS & CO.,
No. 110 Dog Street.

By the thirty-first day of the month this advertisement has brought to the office of Messrs. Bogs, Hogs, Logs, Frogs and Company, some fifteen or twenty young gentlemen piously inclined. But our man of business is in no hurry to conclude a contract with any—no man of business is *ever* precipitate—and it is not until the most rigid catechism in respect to the piety of each young gentleman's inclination, that his services are engaged and his fifty dollars received for, *just* by way of proper precaution, on the part of the respectable firm of Bogs, Hogs, Logs, Frogs and Company. On the morning of the first day of the next month, the landlady does *not* present her bill according to promise—a piece of neglect for which the comfortable head of the house ending in *ogs* would no doubt have chided her severely could he have been prevailed upon to remain in town a day or two for that purpose.

As it is, the constables have had a sad time of it,

running hither and thither, and all they can do is to declare the man of business most emphatically, "a hen knee high"—by which some persons imagine them to imply that, in fact, he is N. E. I.—by which again the very classical phrase *non est inventus* is supposed to be understood. In the meantime the young gentlemen, one and all, are somewhat less piously inclined than before, while the landlady purchases a shilling's worth of the best India rubber, and very carefully obliterates the pencil memorandum that some fool has made in her great Family Bible, on the broad margin of the Proverbs of Solomon.

THE ANGEL OF THE ODD.

AN EXTRAVAGANZA.

It was a chilly November afternoon. I had just consummated an unusually hearty dinner, of which the dyspeptic *truffe* formed not the least important item, and was sitting alone in the dining-room with my feet upon the fender and at my elbow a small table which I had rolled up to the fire, and upon which were some apologies for dessert, with some miscellaneous bottles of wine, spirit, and *liqueur*. In the morning I had been reading Glover's "Leonidas," Wilkie's "Epigoniad," Lamartine's "Pilgrimage," Barlow's "Columbiad," Tucker-man's "Sicily," and Griswold's "Curiosities;" I am willing to confess, therefore, that I now felt a little stupid. I made effort to arouse myself by frequent aid of Lafitte, and all failing, I betook myself to a stray newspaper in despair. Having carefully perused the column of "houses to let," and the column of "dogs lost," and then the two columns of "wives and apprentices runaway," I attacked with great resolution the editorial matter, and reading it from beginning to end without understanding a syllable, conceived the possibility of its being Chinese, and so re-read it from the end to the beginning, but with no more satisfactory result. I was about throwing away in disgust

This folio of four pages, happy work
Which not even critics criticise,

when I felt my attention somewhat aroused by the paragraph which follows:—

“The avenues to death are numerous and strange. A London paper mentions the decease of a person from a singular cause. He was playing at ‘puff the dart,’ which is played with a long needle inserted in some worsted, and blown at a target through a tin tube. He placed the needle at the wrong end of the tube, and drawing his breath strongly to puff the dart forward with force, drew the needle into his throat. It entered the lungs, and in a few days killed him.”

Upon seeing this I fell into a great rage, without exactly knowing why. “This thing,” I exclaimed, “is a contemptible falsehood—a poor hoax—the lees of the invention of some pitiable penny-a-liner, of some wretched concocter of accidents in Cocaigne. These fellows, knowing the extravagant gullibility of the age, set their wits to work in the imagination of improbable possibilities, of odd accidents as they term them, but to a reflecting intellect (like mine,” I added, in parenthesis, putting my forefinger unconsciously to the side of my nose), “to a contemplative understanding such as I myself possess, it seems evident at once that the marvelous increase of late in these ‘odd accidents’ is by far the oddest accident of all. For my own part, I intend to believe nothing henceforward that has anything of the ‘singular’ about it.”

“Mein Gott, den, vat a vool you bees for dat!” replied one of the most remarkable voices I ever heard. At first I took it for a rumbling in my ears—such as a man sometimes experiences when getting very drunk—but upon second thought, I considered the sound as more nearly resembling that which proceeds from an empty barrel beaten with a big stick; and, in fact,

this I should have concluded it to be, but for the articulation of the syllables and words. I am by no means naturally nervous, and the very few glasses of Lafitte which I had sipped served to embolden me a little, so that I felt nothing of trepidation, but merely uplifted my eyes with a leisurely movement and looked carefully around the room for the intruder. I could not, however, perceive any one at all.

"Humph!" resumed the voice as I continued my survey, "you must pe so dronk as de pig, den, for not zee me as I zit here at your zide."

Hereupon I bethought me of looking immediately before my nose, and there, sure enough, confronting me at the table sat a personage nondescript, although not altogether indescribable. His body was a wine-pipe or a rum puncheon, or something of that character, and had a truly Falstaffian air. In its nether extremity were inserted two kegs, which seemed to answer all the purposes of legs. For arms there dangled from the upper portion of the carcass two tolerably long bottles with the necks outward for hands. All the head that I saw the monster possessed of was one of those Hessian canteens which resemble a large snuff-box with a hole in the middle of the lid. This canteen (with a funnel on its top like a cavalier cap slouched over the eyes) was set on edge upon the puncheon, with the hole toward myself; and through this hole, which seemed puckered up like the mouth of a very precise old maid, the creature was emitting certain rumbling and grumbling noises which he evidently intended for intelligible talk.

"I zay," said he, "you mos pe dronk as de pig, vor zit dare and not zee me zit ere; and I zay, doo, you mos pe bigger vool as de goose, vor to disbelief vat iz

print in de print. 'Tis de troof—dat it iz—ebery vord ob it."

"Who are you, pray?" said I with much dignity, although somewhat puzzled; "how did you get here? and what is it you are talking about?"

"As vor ow I com'd ere," replied the figure, "dat iz none of your pizziness; and as vor vat I be talking apout, I be talk apout vat I tink proper; and as vor who I be, vy dat is de very ting I com'd here for to let you zee for yourself."

"You are a drunken vagabond," said I, "and I shall ring the bell and order my footman to kick you into the street."

"He! he! he!" said the fellow, "hu! hu! hu! dat you can't do."

"Can't do!" said I, "what do you mean?—I can't do what?"

"Ring de pell," he replied, attempting a grin with his little villainous mouth.

Upon this I made an effort to get up in order to put my threat into execution, but the ruffian just reached across the table very deliberately, and hitting me a tap on the forehead with the neck of one of the long bottles, knocked me back into the arm-chair from which I had half arisen. I was utterly astounded, and for a moment was quite at a loss what to do. In the meantime he continued his talk.

"You zee," said he, "it iz te bess vor zit still; and now you shall know who I pe. Lock at me! zee! I am te *Angel ov te Odd*."

"And odd enough, too," I ventured to reply; "but I was always under the impression that an angel had wings."

"Te wing!" he cried, highly incensed, "vat I pe

do mit te wing? Mein Gott! do you take me for a chicken?"

"No—oh no!" I replied, much alarmed, "you are no chicken—certainly not."

"Well, den, zit still and pehabe yourself, or I'll rap you again mid me vist. It iz te shicken ab te wing, und te owl ab te wing, und te imp ab te wing, und te head-teuffel ab te wing. Te angel ab *not* te wing, and I am te *Angel ov te Odd*."

"And your business with me at present is—is"—

"My pizziness!" ejaculated the thing, "vy vat a low-bred buppy you mos pe vor to ask a gentleman und an angel apout his pizziness!"

This language was rather more than I could bear, even from an angel; so, plucking up courage, I seized a salt-cellar which lay within reach, and hurled it at the head of the intruder. Either he dodged, however, or my aim was inaccurate; for all I accomplished was the demolition of the crystal which protected the dial of the clock upon the mantelpiece. As for the Angel he evinced his sense of my assault by giving me two or three hard consecutive raps upon the forehead as before. These reduced me at once to submission, and I am almost ashamed to confess that, either through pain or vexation, there came a few tears into my eyes.

"Mein Gott!" said the Angel of the Odd, apparently much softened at my distress; "mein Gott, te man is eder ferry dronk or ferry zorry. You mos not trink it so strong—you mos put te water in te wine. Here, trink dis, like a goot veller, and don't gry now—don't!"

Hereupon the Angel of the Odd replenished my goblet (which was about a third full of port) with a colorless fluid that he poured from one of his hand-bottles. I observed that these bottles had labels about

their necks, and that these labels were inscribed “Kirschenwässer.”

The considerate kindness of the Angel mollified me in no little measure ; and, aided by the water with which he diluted my port more than once, I at length regained sufficient temper to listen to his very extraordinary discourse. I cannot pretend to recount all that he told me, but I gleaned from what he said that he was the genius who presided over the *contretemps* of mankind, and whose business it was to bring about the *odd accidents* which are continually astonishing the skeptic. Once or twice, upon my venturing to express my total incredulity in respect to his pretensions he grew very angry indeed, so that at length I considered it the wiser policy to say nothing at all and let him have his own way. He talked on, therefore, at great length, while I merely leaned back in my chair with my eyes shut, and amused myself with munching raisins and filliping the stems about the room. But, by and by, the Angel suddenly construed this behavior of mine into contempt. He arose in a terrible passion, slouched his funnel down over his eyes, swore a vast oath, uttered a threat of some character, which I did not precisely comprehend, and finally made me a low bow and departed, wishing me, in the language of the archbishop in Gil Blas, “*beaucoup de bonheur et un peu plus de bon sens.*”

His departure afforded me relief. The *very* few glasses of Lafitte that I had sipped had the effect of rendering me drowsy, and I felt inclined to take a nap of some fifteen or twenty minutes, as is my custom after dinner. At six I had an appointment of consequence, which it was quite indispensable that I should keep. The policy of insurance for my dwelling-house had expired the day before ; and some dispute having

arisen it was agreed that, at six, I should meet the board of directors of the company and settle the terms of a renewal. Glancing upward at the clock on the mantelpiece (for I felt too drowsy to take out my watch), I had the pleasure to find that I had still twenty-five minutes to spare. It was half-past five; I could easily walk to the insurance office in five minutes; and my usual siestas had never been known to exceed five-and-twenty. I felt sufficiently safe, therefore, and composed myself to my slumbers forthwith.

Having completed them to my satisfaction, I again looked toward the time-piece, and was half inclined to believe in the possibility of odd accidents when I found that, instead of my ordinary fifteen or twenty minutes, I had been dozing only three; for it still wanted seven-and-twenty of the appointed hour. I betook myself again to my nap, and at length a second time awoke, when, to my utter amazement, it *still* wanted twenty-seven minutes of six. I jumped up to examine the clock, and found that it had ceased running. My watch informed me that it was half-past seven; and of course, having slept two hours, I was too late for my appointment. "It will make no difference," I said: "I can call at the office in the morning and apologize; in the meantime, what can be the matter with the clock?" Upon examining it I discovered that one of the raisin stems which I had been filliping about the room during the discourse of the Angel of the Odd, had flown through the fractured crystal, and lodging, singularly enough, in the key-hole, with an end projecting outward, had thus arrested the revolution of the minute hand.

"Ah!" said I, "I see how it is. This thing speaks for itself. A natural accident, such as *will* happen now and then!"

I gave the matter no further consideration, and at my usual hour retired to bed. Here, having placed a candle upon a reading stand at the bed head, and having made an attempt to peruse some pages of the "Omnipresence of the Deity," I unfortunately fell asleep in less than twenty seconds, leaving the light burning as it was.

My dreams were terrifically disturbed by visions of the Angel of the Odd. Methought he stood at the foot of the couch, drew aside the curtains, and in the hollow, detestable tones of a rum puncheon, menaced me with the bitterest vengeance for the contempt with which I had treated him. He concluded a long harangue by taking off his funnel-cap, inserting the tube into my gullet, and thus deluging me with an ocean of Kirschenwässer, which he poured in a continuous flood, from one of the long-necked bottles that stood him instead of an arm. My agony was at length insufferable, and I awoke just in time to perceive that the rat had run off with the lighted candle from the stand, but *not* in season to prevent his making his escape with it through the hole. Very soon a strong suffocating odor assailed my nostrils; the house, I clearly perceived, was on fire. In a few minutes the blaze broke forth with violence, and in an incredibly brief period the entire building was wrapped in flames. All egress from my chamber, except through a window, was cut off. The crowd, however, quickly procured and raised a long ladder. By means of this I was descending rapidly, and in apparent safety, when a huge hog, about whose rotund stomach, and indeed about whose whole air and physiognomy, there was something which reminded me of the Angel of the Odd—when this hog, I say, which hitherto had been quietly slumbering in the

mud, took it suddenly into his head that his left shoulder needed scratching, and could find no more convenient rubbing-post than that afforded by the foot of the ladder. In an instant I was precipitated, and had the misfortune to fracture my arm.

This accident, with the loss of my insurance, and with the more serious loss of my hair, the whole of which had been singed off by the fire, predisposed me to serious impressions, so that, finally, I made up my mind to take a wife. There was a rich widow disconsolate for the loss of her seventh husband, and to her wounded spirit I offered the balm of my vows. She yielded a reluctant consent to my prayers. I knelt at her feet in gratitude and adoration. She blushed and bowed her luxuriant tresses into close contact with those supplied me temporarily by Grandjean. I know not how the entanglement took place, but so it was. I arose with a shining pate, wigless; she in disdain and wrath, half buried in alien hair. Thus ended my hopes of the widow by an accident which could not have been anticipated, be sure, but which the natural sequence of events had brought about.

Without despairing, however, I undertook the siege of a less implacable heart. The fates were again propitious for a brief period; but again a trivial incident interfered. Meeting my betrothed in an avenue thronged with the *élite* of the city, I was hastening to greet her with one of my best-considered bows, when a small particle of some foreign matter lodging in the corner of my eye, rendered me for the moment completely blind. Before I could recover my sight, the lady of my love had disappeared—irreparably affronted at what she chose to consider my premediated rudeness in passing her by ungreeted. While I stood bewildered at the suddenness of this accident (which

might have happened, nevertheless, to any one under the sun), and while I still continued incapable of sight, I was accosted by the Angel of the Odd, who proffered me his aid with a civility which I had no reason to expect. He examined my disordered eye with much gentleness and skill, informed me that I had a drop in it, and (whatever a "drop" was) took it out, and afforded me relief.

I now considered it high time to die (since fortune had so determined to persecute me), and accordingly made my way to the nearest river. Here, divesting myself of my clothes (for there is no reason why we cannot die as we were born), I threw myself headlong into the current; the sole witness of my fate being a solitary crow that had been seduced into the eating of brandy-saturated corn, and so had staggered away from his fellows. No sooner had I entered the water than this bird took it into his head to fly away with the most indispensable portion of my apparel. Postponing, therefore, for the present, my suicidal design, I just slipped my nether extremities into the sleeves of my coat, and betook myself to a pursuit of the felon with all the nimbleness which the case required and its circumstances would admit. But my evil destiny attended me still. As I ran at full speed, with my nose up in the atmosphere, and intent only upon the purloiner of my property, I suddenly perceived that my feet rested no longer upon *terra firma*; the fact is, I had thrown myself over a precipice, and should inevitably have been dashed to pieces but for my good fortune in grasping the end of a long guide-rope, which depended from a passing balloon.

As soon as I sufficiently recovered my senses to comprehend the terrific predicament in which I stood or rather hung, I exerted all the power of my lungs to

make that predicament known to the aeronaut overhead. But for a long time I exerted myself in vain. Either the fool could not, or the villain would not perceive me. Meanwhile the machine rapidly soared, while my strength even more rapidly failed. I was soon upon the point of resigning myself to my fate and dropping quietly into the sea, when my spirits were suddenly revived by hearing a hollow voice from above, which seemed to be lazily humming an opera air. Looking up, I perceived the Angel of the Odd. He was leaning with his arms folded, over the rim of the car; and with a pipe in his mouth, at which he puffed leisurely, seemed to be upon excellent terms with himself and the universe. I was too much exhausted to speak, so I merely regarded him with an imploring air.

For several minutes, although he looked me full in the face, he said nothing. At length, removing carefully his meerschaum from the right to the left corner of his mouth, he condescended to speak.

"Who pe you," he asked, "und what der teuffel you pe do dare?"

To this piece of impudence, cruelty, and affection, I could reply only by ejaculating the monosyllable "Help!"

"Elp!" echoed the ruffian, "not I. Dare iz te pottle —elp yourself, und pe tam'd!"

With these words he let fall a heavy bottle of Kirschenwässer, which, dropping precisely upon the crown of my head, caused me to imagine that my brains were entirely knocked out. Impressed with this idea I was about to relinquish my hold and give up the ghost with a good grace, when I was arrested by the cry of the Angel, who bade me hold on.

"'Old on!" he said: "don't pe in te urry—don't.

Will you pe take de odder pottle, or ave you pe got
zober yet and come to your zenzes?"

I made haste, hereupon, to nod my head twice—once in the negative, meaning thereby that I would prefer not taking the other bottle at present; and once in the affirmative, intending thus to imply that I *was* sober and *had* positively come to my senses. By these means I somewhat softened the Angel.

"Und you pelief, ten," he inquired, "at te last? You pelief, ten, in te possibility of te odd?"

I again nodded my head in assent.

"Und you ave pelief in *me*, te Angel of te Odd?"

I nodded again.

"Und you acknowledge tat you pe te blind dronk und te vool?"

I nodded once more.

"Put your right hand into your left hand preeches pocket, ten, in token ov your vull zubmizzion unto te Angel ov te Odd."

This thing, for very obvious reasons, I found it quite impossible to do. In the first place, my left arm had been broken in my fall from the ladder, and therefore, had I let go my hold with the right hand I must have let go altogether. In the second place, I could have no breeches until I came across the crow. I was therefore obliged, much to my regret, to shake my head in the negative, intending thus to give the Angel to understand that I found it inconvenient, just at that moment, to comply with his very reasonable demand! No sooner, however, had I ceased shaking my head than—

"Go to der teuffel, ten!" roared the Angel of the Odd.

In pronouncing these words he drew a sharp knife across the guide-rope by which I was suspended, and

as we then happened to be precisely over my own house (which, during my peregrinations, had been handsomely rebuilt), it so occurred that I tumbled headlong down the ample chimney and lit upon the dining-room hearth.

Upon coming to my senses (for the fall had very thoroughly stunned me) I found it about four o'clock in the morning. I lay outstretched where I had fallen from the balloon. My head groveled in the ashes of an extinguished fire, while my feet reposed upon the wreck of a small table, overthrown, and amid the fragments of a miscellaneous dessert, intermingled with a newspaper, some broken glasses and shattered bottles, and an empty jug of the Schiedam Kirschenwässer. Thus revenged himself the Angel of the Odd.



MELLONTA TAUTA.

ON BOARD BALLOON "SKYLARK,"
April 1, 2848.

Now, my dear friend—now, for your sins, you are to suffer the infliction of a long gossiping letter. I tell you distinctly that I am going to punish you for all your impertinences by being as tedious, as discursive, as incoherent, and as unsatisfactory as possible. Besides, here I am, cooped up in a dirty balloon, with some one or two hundred of the *canaille*, all bound on a *pleasure* excursion (what a funny idea some people have of pleasure!) and I have no prospect of touching *terra firma* for a month at least. Nobody to talk to. Nothing to do. When one has nothing to do, then is the time to correspond with one's friend. You perceive, then, why it is that I write you this letter—it is on account of my *ennui* and your sins.

Get ready your spectacles and make up your mind to be annoyed. I mean to write at you every day during this odious voyage.

Heigho! when will any *Invention* visit the human pericranium? Are we forever to be doomed to the thousand inconveniences of the balloon? Will *nobody* contrive a more expeditious mode of progress? This jog-trot movement, to my thinking, is little less than positive torture. Upon my word, we have not made more than a hundred miles the hour since leaving home! The very birds beat us—at least some of them. I assure you that I do not exaggerate at all. Our motion, no doubt, seems slower than it actually is—

this on account of our having no objects about us by which to estimate our velocity, and on account of our going with the wind. To be sure, whenever we meet a balloon we have a chance of perceiving our rate, and then I admit things do not appear so very bad. Accustomed as I am to this mode of traveling, I cannot get over a kind of giddiness whenever a balloon passes us in a current directly overhead. It always seems to me like an immense bird of prey about to pounce upon us and carry us off in its claws. One went over us this morning about sunrise, and so nearly overhead that its drag-rope actually brushed the network suspending our car, and caused us very serious apprehensions. Our captain said that if the material of the bag had been the trumpery varnished "silk" of five hundred or a thousand years ago, we should inevitably have been damaged. This silk, as he explained it to me, was a fabric composed of the entrails of a species of earth-worm. The worm was carefully fed on mulberries—a kind of fruit resembling a watermelon—and, when sufficiently fat, was crushed in a mill. The paste thus arising was called *papyrus* in its primary state, and went through a variety of processes until it finally became "silk." Singular to relate, it was once much admired as an article of *female dress!* Balloons were also very generally constructed from it. A better kind of material, it appears, was subsequently found in the down surrounding the seed-vessels of a plant vulgarly called *euphorbium*, and at that time botanically termed milk-weed. This latter kind of silk was designated as silk-buckingham, on account of its superior durability, and was usually prepared for use by being varnished with a solution of gum caoutchouc—a substance which in some respects must have resembled the *gutta percha* now in

common use. This caoutchoue was occasionally called India rubber or rubber of whist, and was no doubt one of the numerous *fungi*. Never tell me again that I am not at heart an antiquarian.

Talking of drag-ropes—our own, it seems, has this moment knocked a man overboard from one of the small magnetic propellers that swarm in ocean below us—a boat of about six thousand tons, and, from all accounts, shamefully crowded. These diminutive barques should be prohibited from carrying more than a definite number of passengers. The man of course was not permitted to get on board again, and was soon out of sight, he and his life-preserved. I rejoice, my dear friend, that we live in an age so enlightened that no such a thing as an individual is supposed to exist. It is the mass for which the true Humanity cares. By-the-bye, talking of Humanity, do you know that our immortal Wiggins is not so original in his views of the Social condition and so forth, as his contemporaries are inclined to suppose? Pundit assures me that the same ideas were put nearly in the same way about a thousand years ago, by an Irish philosopher, called Furrier on account of his keeping a retail shop for cat peltries and other furs. Pundit *knows*, you know; there can be no mistake about it. How very wonderfully do we see verified every day the profound observation of the Hindoo Aries Tottle (as quoted by Pundit)—“Thus must we say that, not once or twice, or a few times, but with almost infinite repetitions, the same opinions come round in a circle among men.”

April 2. Spoke to-day the magnetic cutter in charge of the middle section of floating telegraph wires. I learn that when this species of telegraph was first put into operation by Horse, it was considered quite impossible

to convey the wires over sea ; but now we are at a loss to comprehend where the difficulty lay ! So wags the world. *Tempora mutantur*—excuse me for quoting the Etruscan. What *would* we do without the Atlantic Telegraph ? (Pundit says Atlantic was the ancient adjective.) We lay-to a few minutes to ask the cutter some questions, and learned, among other glorious news, that civil war is raging in Africa, while the plague is doing its good work beautifully both in Yurope and Ayesher. Is it not truly remarkable that before the magnificent light shed upon philosophy by Humanity, the world was accustomed to regard War and Pestilence as calamities ? Do you know that prayers were actually offered up in the ancient temples to the end that these *evils* (!) might not be visited upon mankind ? Is it not really difficult to comprehend upon what principle of interest our forefathers acted ? Were they so blind as not to perceive that the destruction of a myriad of individuals is only so much positive advantage to the mass ?

April 3. It is really a very fine amusement to ascend the rope-ladder leading to the summit of the balloon-bag and thence survey the surrounding world. From the car below, you know, the prospect is not so comprehensive—you can see little vertically. But seated here (where I write this) in the luxurious-cushioned open piazza of the summit, one can see everything that is going on in all directions. Just now there is quite a crowd of balloons in sight, and they present a very animated appearance, while the air is resonant which the hum of so many millions of human voices. I have heard it asserted that when Yellow or (as Pundit *will* have it) Violet, who is supposed to have been the first aeronaut, maintained the practicability

of traversing the atmosphere in all directions, by merely ascending or descending until a favorable current was attained, he was scarcely hearkened to at all by his contemporaries, who looked upon him as merely an ingenious sort of madman, because the philosophers (!) of the day declared the thing impossible. Really now it does seem to me *quite* unaccountable how anything so obviously feasible could have escaped the sagacity of the ancient *savants*. But in all ages, the great obstacles to advancement in Art have been opposed by the so-called men of science. To be sure, *our* men of science are not quite so bigoted as those of old :—oh, I have something so queer to tell you on this topic. Do you know that it is not more than a thousand years ago since the metaphysicians consented to relieve the people of the singular fancy that there existed but *two possible roads for the attainment of Truth!* Believe it if you can! It appears that long, long ago, in the night of Time, there lived a Turkish philosopher (or Hindoo possibly) called Aries Tottle. This person introduced, or at all events propagated, what was termed the deductive or *a priori* mode of investigation. He started with what he maintained to be axioms or “self-evident truths,” and thence proceeded “logically” to results. His greatest disciples were one Neuelid and one Cant. Well, Aries Tottle flourished supreme until the advent of one Hogg, surnamed the “Ettrick Shepherd,” who preached an entirely different system, which he called the *a posteriori* or inductive. His plan referred altogether to sensation. He proceeded by observing, analyzing, and classifying facts—*instantiae naturæ*, as they were affectedly called, into general laws. Aries Tottle’s mode, in a word, was based on *noumena*; Hogg’s on *phenomena*. Well, so great was the admiration

excited by this latter system, that, at its first introduction, Aries Tottle fell into disrepute; but finally he recovered ground, and was permitted to divide the realm of Truth with his more modern rival. The *savants* now maintained that the Aristotelian and *Baconian* roads were the sole possible avenues to knowledge. "Baconian," you must know, was an adjective invented as equivalent to "Hoggian," and more euphonious and dignified.

Now, my dear friend, I do assure you most positively that I represent this matter fairly on the soundest authority; and you can easily understand how a notion so absurd on its very face must have operated to retard the progress of all true knowledge—which makes its advances almost invariably by intuitive bounds. The ancient idea confined investigation to *crawling*; and for hundreds of years so great was the infatuation about Hogg especially, that a virtual end was put to all thinking, properly so called. No man dared utter a truth to which he felt himself indebted to his *soul* alone. It mattered not whether the truth was even *demonstrably* a truth, for the bullet-headed *savants* of the time regarded only *the road* by which he had attained it. They would not even *look* at the end. "Let us see the means!" they cried, "the means!" If, upon investigation of the means, it was found to come neither under the category Aries (that is to say, Ram) nor under the category Hogg, why then the *savants* went no farther, but pronounced the "theorist" a fool, and would have nothing to do with him or his truth.

Now, it cannot be maintained even, that by the crawling system the greatest amount of truth would be attained in any long series of ages, for the repression of *imagination* was an evil not to be compensated for by any superior *certainty* in the ancient modes of

investigation. The error of these Jurmaines, these Vrinch, these Inglitch, and these Amriccans (the latter, by the way, were our own immediate progenitors), was an error quite analogous with that of the wiseacre who fancies that he must necessarily see an object the better the more closely he holds it to his eyes. These people blinded themselves by details. When they proceeded Hoggishly, their "facts" were by means always facts—a matter of little consequence, had it not been for assuming that they *were* facts, and must be facts, because they appeared to be such. When they proceeded on the path of the Ram, their course was scarcely as straight as a ram's horn, for they *never had* an axiom which was an axiom at all. They must have been very blind not to see this, even in their own day; for even in their own day, many of the long "established" axioms had been rejected. For example—"Ex nihilo nihil fit;" "a body cannot act where it is not;" "there cannot exist antipodes;" "darkness cannot come out of light"—all these, and a dozen other similar propositions, formerly admitted without hesitation as axioms, were, even at the period of which I speak, seen to be untenable. How absurd in these people, then, to persist in putting faith in "axioms" as immutable bases of Truth! But even out of the mouths of their soundest reasoners it is easy to demonstrate the futility, the impalpability of their axioms in general. Who *was* the soundest of their logicians? Let me see! I will go and ask Pundit and be back in a minute. . . . Ah, here we have it! Here is a book written nearly a thousand years ago and lately translated from the Inglitch—which, by the way, appears to have been the rudiment of the Amriccan. Pundit says it is decidedly the cleverest ancient work on its topic, Logic. The author (who

was much thought of in his day) was one Miller, or Mill; and we find it recorded of him, as a point of some importance, that he had a mill-horse called Bentham. But let us glance at the treatise!

Ah!—“Ability or inability to conceive,” says Mr. Mill, very properly, “is in no case to be received as a criterion of axiomatic truth.” What *modern* in his senses would ever think of disputing this truism? The only wonder with us must be, how it happened that Mr. Mill conceived it necessary even to hint at anything so obvious. So far, good—let us turn over another page. What have we here?—“Contradictories cannot both be true—that is, cannot co-exist in nature.” Here Mr. Mill means, for example, that a tree must be either a tree or not a tree—that it cannot be at the same time a tree and not a tree. Very well; but I ask him *why*. His reply is this—and never pretends to be anything else than this—“Because it is impossible to conceive that contradictories can both be true.” But this is no answer at all, by his own showing; for has he not just admitted as a truism that “ability or inability to conceive is *in no case* to be received as a criterion of axiomatic truth?”

Now I do not complain of these ancients so much because their logic is, by their own showing, utterly baseless, worthless, and fantastic altogether, as because of their pompous and imbecile proscription of all *other* roads of Truth, of all *other* means for its attainment than the two preposterous paths—the one of creeping and the one of crawling—to which they have dared to confine the Soul that loves nothing so well as to *soar*.

By-the-bye, my dear friend, do you not think it would have puzzled these ancient dogmaticians to have determined by *which* of their two roads it was that the

most important and most sublime of *all* their truths was, in effect, attained? I mean the truth of Gravitation. Newton owed it to Kepler. Kepler admitted that his three laws were *guessed at*—these three laws of all laws which led the great Inglitch mathematician to his principle, the basis of all physical principle—to go behind which we must enter the Kingdom of Metaphysics. Kepler guessed—that is to say, *imagined*. He was essentially a “theorist”—that word now of so much sanctity, formerly an epithet of contempt. Would it not have puzzled these old moles, too, to have explained by which of the two “roads” a cryptographist unriddles a cryptograph of more than usual secrecy, or by which of the two roads Champollion directed mankind to those enduring and almost innumerable truths which resulted from his deciphering the Hieroglyphics?

One word more on this topic and I will be done boring you. Is it not *passing* strange that, with their eternal prating about *roads* to Truth, these bigoted people missed what we now so clearly perceive to be the great highway—that of Consistency? Does it not seem singular how they should have failed to deduce from the works of God the vital fact that a perfect consistency *must* be an absolute truth? How plain has been our progress since the late announcement of this proposition! Investigation has been taken out of the hands of the ground-moles and given, as a task, to the true and only true thinkers, the men of ardent imagination. These latter *theorize*. Can you not fancy the shout of scorn with which my words would be received by our progenitors were it possible for them to be now looking over my shoulder? These men, I say, *theorize*: and their theories are simply corrected, reduced, systematized—cleared, little

by little, of their dross of inconsistency—until finally, a perfect consistency stands apparent which even the most solid admit, because it *is* a consistency, to be an absolute and an unquestionable *truth*.

April 4. The new gas is doing wonders in conjunction with the new improvement with gutta percha. How very safe, commodious, manageable, and in every respect convenient, are our modern balloons! Here is an immense one approaching us at the rate of at least a hundred and fifty miles an hour. It seems to be crowded with people—perhaps there are three or four hundred passengers—and yet it soars to an elevation of nearly a mile, looking down upon poor us with sovereign contempt. Still a hundred or even two hundred miles an hour is slow traveling, after all. *Do* you remember our flight on the railroad across the Kanadaw continent?—fully three hundred miles the hour—that was traveling. Nothing to be seen, though—nothing to be done but flirt, feast, and dance in the magnificent saloons. Do you remember what an odd sensation was experienced when, by chance, we caught a glimpse of external objects while the cars were in full flight? Everything seemed unique—in one mass. For my part, I cannot say but that I preferred the traveling by the slow train of a hundred miles the hour. Here we were permitted to have glass windows—even to have them open—and something like a distinct view of the country was attainable. * * Pundit says that *the route* for the great Kanadaw railroad must have been in some measure marked out about nine hundred years ago! In fact, he goes so far as to assert that actual traces of a road are still discernible—traces referable to a period quite as remote as that mentioned. The track, it appears, was *double* only; ours, you know,

has twelve paths; and three or four new ones are in preparation. The ancient rails were very slight, and placed so close together as to be, according to modern notions, quite frivolous, if not dangerous in the extreme. The present width of track—fifty feet—is considered, indeed, scarcely secure enough. For my part, I make no doubt that a track of some sort *must* have existed in very remote times, as Pundit asserts; for nothing can be clearer to my mind than that at some period—not less than seven centuries ago, certainly—the Northern and Southern Kanadaw continents were *united*; the Kanawdians, then, would have been driven, by necessity, to a great railroad across the continent.

April 5. I am almost devoured by *ennui*. Pundit is the only conversable person on board; and he, poor soul! can speak of nothing but antiquities. He has been occupied all the day in the attempt to convince me that the ancient Amriccans *governed themselves!*—did ever anybody hear of such an absurdity?—that they existed in a sort of every-man-for-himself confederacy, after the fashion of the “prairie dogs” that we read of in fable. He says that they started with the queerest idea conceivable—viz., that all men are born free and equal—this in the very teeth of the laws of *gradation* so visibly impressed upon all things both in the moral and physical universe. Every man “voted,” as they called it—that is to say, meddled with public affairs—until, at length, it was discovered that what is everybody’s business is nobody’s, and that the “Republic” (so the absurd thing was called) was without a government at all. It is related, however, that the first circumstance which disturbed, very particularly, the self-complacency of the philosophers who constructed this “Republic,” was the startling

discovery that universal suffrage gave opportunity for fraudulent schemes, by means of which any desired number of votes might at any time be polled, without the possibility of prevention or even detection, by any party which should be merely villainous enough not to be ashamed of the fraud. A little reflection upon this discovery sufficed to render evident the consequences, which were that rascality *must* predominate—in a word, that a republican government *could* never be anything but a rascally one. While the philosophers, however, were busied in blushing at their stupidity in not having foreseen these inevitable evils, and intent upon the invention of new theories, the matter was put to an abrupt issue by a fellow of the name of *Mob*, who took everything into his own hands and set up a despotism, in comparison with which those of the fabulous Zeros and Hellhofagabaluses were respectable and delectable. This *Mob* (a foreigner, by-the-bye) is said to have been the most odious of all men that ever encumbered the earth. He was a giant in stature—insolent, rapacious, filthy; had the gall of a bullock with a heart of a hyena and the brains of a peacock. He died, at length, by dint of his own energies, which exhausted him. Nevertheless, he had his uses, as everything has, however vile, and taught mankind a lesson which to this day it is in no danger of forgetting—never to run directly contrary to the natural analogies. As for Republicanism, no analogy could be found for it upon the face of the earth—unless we except the case of the “prairie dogs,” an exception which seems to demonstrate, if anything, that democracy is a very admirable form of government—for dogs.

April 6. Last night had a fine view of Alpha Lyrae, whose disk, through our captain's spy-glass, subtends

an angle of half a degree, looking very much as our sun does to the naked eye on a misty day. Alpha Lyrae, although so *very* much larger than our sun by-the-bye, resembles him closely as regards its spots, its atmosphere, and in many other particulars. It is only within the last century, Pundit tells me, that the binary relation existing between these two orbs began even to be suspected. The evident motion of our system in the heavens was (strange to say) referred to an orbit about a prodigious star in the centre of the galaxy. About this star, or at all events about a centre of gravity common to all the globes of the Milky Way, and supposed to be near Aleyone in the Pleiades, every one of these globes was declared to be revolving, our own performing the circuit in a period of 117,000,000 of years! We with our present lights, our vast telescopic improvements, and so forth, of course find it difficult to comprehend *the ground* of an idea such as this. Its first propagator was one Mudler. He was led, we must presume, to this wild hypothesis by mere analogy in the first instance; but this being the case, he should have at least adhered to analogy in its development. A great central orb *was*, in fact, suggested; so far Mudler was consistent. This central orb, however, dynamically should have been greater than all its surrounding orbs taken together. The question might then have been asked,—“Why do we not see it?”—*we*, especially, who occupy the mid region of the cluster—the very locality *near* which, at least, must be situated this inconceivable central sun. The astronomer, perhaps, at this point, took refuge in the suggestion of non-luminosity; and here analogy was suddenly let fall. But even admitting the central orb non-luminous, how did he manage to explain its

failure to be rendered visible by the incalculable host of glorious suns glaring in all directions about it? No doubt what he finally maintained was merely a centre of gravity common to all the revolving orbs—but here again analogy must have been let fall. Our system revolves, it is true, about a common centre of gravity, but it does this in connection with and in consequence of a material sun whose mass more than counter-balances the rest of the system. The mathematical circle is a curve composed of an infinity of straight lines, but this idea of the circle—this idea of it which, in regard to all earthly geometry, we consider as merely the mathematical in contradistinction from the practical idea—is, in sober fact, the *practical* conception which alone we have any right to entertain in respect to those Titanic circles with which we have to deal, at least in fancy, when we suppose our system with its fellows revolving about a point in the centre of the galaxy. Let the most vigorous of human imaginations but attempt to take a single step towards the comprehension of a circuit so unutterable! It would scarcely be paradoxical to say that a flash of lightning itself, traveling *forever* upon the circumference of this inconceivable circle, would still *forever* be traveling in a straight line. That the path of our sun along such a circumference—that the direction of our system in such an orbit—would, to any human perception, deviate in the slightest degree from a straight line even in a million of years, is a proposition not to be entertained; and yet these ancient astronomers were absolutely cajoled, it appears, into believing that a decisive curvature had become apparent during the brief period of their astronomical history—during the mere point—during the utter nothingness of two or three thousand years! How incomprehensible

that considerations such as these did not at once indicate to them the true state of affairs—that of the binary revolution of our sun and Alpha Lyrae around a common centre of gravity!

April 7. Continued last night our astronomical amusements. Had a fine view of the five Nepturian asteroids, and watched with much interest the putting up of a huge impost on a couple of lintels in the new temple at Daphnis in the moon. It was amusing to think that creatures so diminutive as the lunarians, and bearing so little resemblance to humanity, yet evinced a mechanical ingenuity so much superior to our own. One finds it difficult, too, to conceive the vast masses which those people handle so easily, to be as light as our reason tells us they actually are.

April 8. Eureka! Pundit is in his glory. A balloon from Kanadaw spoke us to-day, and threw on board several late papers; they contain some exceedingly curious information relative to Kanawdian or rather to Amricean antiquities. You know, I presume, that laborers have for some months been employed in preparing the ground for a new fountain at Paradise, the emperor's principal pleasure-garden. Paradise, it appears, has been, *literally* speaking, an island time out of mind—that is to say, its northern boundary was always (as far back as any records extend) a rivulet, or rather a very narrow arm of the sea. This arm was gradually widened until it attained its present breadth—a mile. The whole length of the island is nine miles; the breadth varies materially. The entire area (so Pundit says) was, about eight hundred years ago, densely packed with houses, some of them twenty stories high; land (for some most unaccountable reason) being considered as especially precious just in

this vicinity. The disastrous earthquake, however, of the year 2050 so totally uprooted and overwhelmed the town (for it was almost too large to be called a village) that the most indefatigable of our antiquarians have never yet been able to obtain from the site any sufficient data (in the shape of coins, medals, or inscriptions) wherewith to build up even the ghost of a theory concerning the manners, customs, etc., etc., etc., of the aboriginal inhabitants. Nearly all that we have hitherto known of them is, that they were a portion of the Knickerbocker tribe of savages infesting the continent at its first discovery by Recorder Riker, a knight of the Golden Fleece. They were by no means uncivilized, however, but cultivated various arts and even sciences after a fashion of their own. It is related of them that they were acute in many respects, but were oddly afflicted with a monomania for building what in the ancient Amriccan were denominated "churches"—a kind of pagoda instituted for the worship of two idols that went by the names of Wealth and Fashion. In the end, it is said the island became, nine-tenths of it, church. The women, too, it appears, were oddly deformed by a natural protuberance of the region just below the small of the back—although, most unaccountably, this deformity was looked upon altogether in the light of a beauty. One or two pictures of these singular women have, in fact, been miraculously preserved. They look very odd, *very*—like something between a turkey-cock and a dromedary.

Well, these few details are nearly all that have descended to us respecting the ancient Knickerbockers. It seems, however, that while digging in the centre of the emperor's garden (which, you know, covers the whole island), some of the workmen unearthed a

cubical and evidently chiseled block of granite, weighing several hundred pounds. It was in good preservation, having received, apparently, little injury from the convulsion which entombed it. On one of its surfaces was a marble slab with (only think of it!) *an inscription—a legible inscription.* Pundit is in ecstasies. Upon detaching the slab a cavity appeared, containing a leaden box filled with various coins, a long scroll of names, several documents which appear to resemble newspapers, with other matters of intense interest to the antiquarian! There can be no doubt that all these are genuine American reliques belonging to the tribe called Knickerbocker. The papers thrown on board our balloon are filled with facsimiles of the coins, MSS., typography, etc., etc. I copy for your amusement the Knickerbocker inscription on the marble slab :

This Corner Stone of a Monument to the
Memory of
GEORGE WASHINGTON
was laid with appropriate ceremonies on the
19TH DAY OF OCTOBER, 1847,
the anniversary of the surrender of
Lord Cornwallis
to General Washington at Yorktown,
A. D. 1781,
under the auspices of the
Washington Monument Association of the
city of New York.

This, as I give it, is a verbatim translation done by Pundit himself, so there *can* be no mistake about it. From the few words thus preserved we glean several important items of knowledge, not the least interesting of which is the fact that a thousand years ago *actual*

monuments had fallen into disuse, as was all very proper, the people contenting themselves, as we do now, with a mere indication of the design to erect a monument at some future time; a corner-stone being cautiously laid by itself "solitary and alone" (excuse me for quoting the great Amriccan poet Benton!) as a guarantee of the magnanimous *intention*. We ascertain, too, very distinctly, from this admirable inscription, the how, as well as the where and the what, of the great surrender in question. As to the *where*, it was Yorktown (wherever that was), and as to the *what*, it was General Cornwallis (no doubt some wealthy dealer in corn). *He* was surrendered. The inscription commemorates the surrender of—what?—why, "of Lord Cornwallis." The only question is, what could the savages wish him surrendered for? But when we remember that these savages were undoubtedly cannibals, we are led to the conclusion that they intended him for sausage. As to the *how* of the surrender, no language can be more explicit. Lord Cornwallis was surrendered (for sausage) "under the auspices of the Washington Monument Association," no doubt a charitable institution for the depositing of corner-stones. But, heaven bless me! what is the matter? Ah, I see, the balloon has collapsed, and we shall have a tumble into the sea. I have, therefore, only time enough to add, that from a hasty inspection of the facsimiles of newspapers, etc., etc., I find that the great men in those days among the Amriccans were one John, a smith, and one Zachary, a tailor.

Good-bye, until I see you again. Whether you ever get this letter or not is a point of little importance, as I write altogether for my own amusement. I shall cork the MS. up in a bottle, however, and throw it into the sea.—Yours everlastingly,

PUNDITA.

LOSS OF BREATH.

A TALE NEITHER IN NOR OUT OF "BLACKWOOD."

O breathe not, etc.—MOORE'S MELODIES.

The most notorious ill fortune must in the end yield to the untiring courage of philosophy—as the most stubborn city to the ceaseless vigilance of an enemy. Shalmaneser, as we have it in the holy writings, lay three years before Samaria; yet it fell. Sardanapalus—see Diodorus—maintained himself seven in Nineveh; but to no purpose. Troy expired at the close of the second lustrum; and Azoth, as Aristæus declares upon his honor as a gentleman, opened at last her gates to Psammetichus, after having barred them for the fifth part of a century. . . .

"Thou wretch!—thou vixen!—thou shrew!" said I to my wife on the morning after our wedding, "thou witch!—thou hag!—thou whipper snapper!—thou sink of iniquity!—thou fiery-faced quintessence of all that is abominable!—thou—thou—"—here standing upon tiptoe, seizing her by the throat, and placing my mouth close to her ear, I was preparing to launch forth a new and more decided epithet of opprobrium, which should not fail, if ejaculated, to convince her of her insignificance, when to my extreme horror and astonishment I discovered that *I had lost my breath*.

The phrases, "I am out of breath," "I have lost my breath," etc., are often enough repeated in common conversation; but it had never occurred to me that the terrible accident of which I speak could *bondā fide*

and actually happen ! Imagine—that is if you have a fanciful turn—imagine, I say, my wonder—my consternation—my despair !

There is a good genius, however, which has never entirely deserted me. In my most ungovernable moods I still retain a sense of propriety *et le chemin de passions me conduit*—as Lord Edouard in the “*Nouvelle Héloïse*” says it did him—*à la philosophie véritable*.

Although I could not at first precisely ascertain to what degree the occurrence had affected me, I determined at all events to conceal the matter from my wife until further experience should discover to me the extent of this my unheard-of calamity. Altering my countenance, therefore, in a moment, from its bepuffed and distorted appearance to an expression of arch and coquettish benignity, I gave my lady a pat on the one cheek, and a kiss on the other, and without saying one syllable (Furies ! I could not), left her astonished at my drollery, as I pirouetted out of the room, in a *pas de zéphyr*.

Behold me then safely ensconced in my private *boudoir*, a fearful instance of the ill consequences attending upon irascibility—alive, with the qualifications of the dead—dead, with the propensities of the living—an anomaly on the face of the earth—being very calm, yet breathless.

Yes ! breathless. I am serious in asserting that my breath was entirely gone. I could not have stirred with it a feather if my life had been at issue, or sullied even the delicacy of a mirror. Hard fate !—yet there was some alleviation to the first overwhelming paroxysm of my sorrow. I found, upon trial, that the powers of utterance which, upon my inability to proceed in the conversation with my wife, I then concluded to be totally destroyed, were in fact only partially impeded,

and I discovered that had I, at that interesting crisis, dropped my voice to a singularly deep guttural, I might still have continued to her the communication of my sentiments; this pitch of voice (the guttural) depending, I find, not upon the current of the breath, but upon a certain spasmodic action of the muscles of the throat.

Throwing myself upon a chair, I remained for some time absorbed in meditation. My reflections, to be sure, were of no consolatory kind. A thousand vague and lachrymatory fancies took possession of my soul—and even the idea of suicide flitted across my brain; but it is a trait in the perversity of human nature to reject the obvious and the ready, for the far distant and equivocal. Thus I shuddered at self-murder as the most decided of atrocities, while the tabby cat-purred strenuously upon the rug and the very water-dog wheezed assiduously under the table; each taking to itself much merit for the strength of its lungs, and all obviously done in derision of my own pulmonary incapacity.

Oppressed with a tumult of vague hopes and fears, I at length heard the footsteps of my wife descending the staircase. Being now assured of her absence, I returned with a palpitating heart to the scene of my disaster.

Carefully locking the door on the inside, I commenced a vigorous search. It was possible, I thought, that, concealed in some obscure corner, or lurking in some closet or drawer, might be found the lost object of my inquiry. It might have a vapory—it might even have a tangible form. Most philosophers, upon many points of philosophy, are still very unphilosophical. William Godwin, however, says in his "Mandeville," that "invisible things are the only realities," and this, all will allow, is a case in point. I would have the judicious reader pause before accusing such asseverations of an undue quantum

of absurdity. Anaxagoras, it will be remembered, maintained that snow is black, and this I have since found to be the case.

Long and earnestly did I continue the investigation ; but the contemptible reward of my industry and perseverance proved to be only a set of false teeth, two pairs of hips, an eye, and a bundle of *billets-doux* from Mr. Windenough to my wife. I might as well here observe that this confirmation of my lady's partiality for Mr. W. occasioned me little uneasiness. That Mrs. Lackobreath should admire anything so dissimilar to myself was a natural and necessary evil. I am, it is well known, of a robust and corpulent appearance, and at the same time somewhat diminutive in stature. What wonder, then, that the lath-like tenuity of my acquaintance, and his altitude, which has grown into a proverb, should have met with all due estimation in the eyes of Mrs. Lackobreath ? But to return.

My exertions, as I have before said, proved fruitless. Closet after closet—drawer after drawer—corner after corner—were scrutinized to no purpose. At one time, however, I thought myself sure of my prize, having, in rummaging a dressing-case, accidentally demolished a bottle of Grandjean's Oil of Archangels—which, as an agreeable perfume, I here take the liberty of recommending.

With a heavy heart I returned to my *boudoir*—there to ponder upon some method of eluding my wife's penetration, until I could make arrangements prior to my leaving the country, for to this I had already made up my mind. In a foreign climate, being unknown, I might, with some probability of success, endeavor to conceal my unhappy calamity—a calamity calculated, even more than beggary, to estrange the affections of the multitude,

and to draw down upon the wretch the well-merited indignation of the virtuous and the happy. I was not long in hesitation. Being naturally quick, I committed to memory the entire tragedy of "Metamora." I had the good fortune to recollect that in the accentuation of this drama, or at least such portion of it as is allotted to the hero, the tones of voice in which I found myself deficient were altogether unnecessary, and that the deep guttural was expected to reign monotonously throughout.

I practiced for some time by the borders of a well-frequented marsh;—herein, however, having no reference to a similar proceeding of Demosthenes, but from a design peculiarly and conscientiously my own. Thus armed at all points, I determined to make my wife believe that I was suddenly smitten with a passion for the stage. In this, I succeeded to a miracle; and to every question or suggestion found myself at liberty to reply in my most frog-like and sepulchral tones with some passage from the tragedy—any portion of which, as I soon took great pleasure in observing, would apply equally well to any particular subject. It is not to be supposed, however, that in the delivery of such passages I was found at all deficient in the looking asquint—the showing my teeth—the working my knees—the shuffling my feet—or in any of those unmentionable graces which are now justly considered the characteristics of a popular performer. To be sure, they spoke of confining me in a strait-jacket—but, good God! they never suspected me of having lost my breath.

Having at length put my affairs in order, I took my seat very early one morning in the mail stage for —, giving it to be understood among my acquaintances that business of the last importance required my immediate personal attendance in that city.

The coach was crammed to repletion ; but in the uncertain twilight the features of my companions could not be distinguished. Without making any effectual resistance, I suffered myself to be placed between two gentlemen of colossal dimensions ; while a third, of a size larger, requesting pardon for the liberty he was about to take, threw himself upon my body at full length, and falling asleep in an instant, drowned all my guttural ejaculations for relief, in a snore which would have put to blush the roarings of the bull of Phalaris. Happily the state of my respiratory faculties rendered suffocation an accident entirely out of the question.

As, however, the day broke more distinctly in our approach to the outskirts of the city, my tormentor, arising and adjusting his shirt-collar, thanked me in a very friendly manner for my civility. Seeing that I remained motionless (all my limbs were dislocated and my head twisted on one side), his apprehensions began to be excited ; and arousing the rest of the passengers, he communicated in a very decided manner his opinion that a dead man had been palmed upon them during the night for a living and responsible fellow-traveler ; here giving me a thump on the right eye, by way of demonstrating the truth of his suggestion.

Hereupon all, one after another (there were nine in company), believed it their duty to pull me by the ear. A young practicing physician, too, having applied a pocket-mirror to my mouth, and found me without breath, the assertion of my persecutor was pronounced a true bill ; and the whole party expressed a determination to endure tamely no such impositions for the future, and to proceed no further with any such carcasses for the present.

I was here, accordingly, thrown out at the sign of

the "Crow" (by which tavern the coach happened to be passing) without meeting with any farther accident than the breaking of both my arms under the left hind wheel of the vehicle. I must besides do the driver the justice to state that he did not forget to throw after me the largest of my trunks, which unfortunately falling on my head, fractured my skull in a manner at once interesting and extraordinary.

The landlord of the "Crow," who is a hospitable man, finding that my trunk contained sufficient to indemnify him for any little trouble he might take in my behalf, sent forthwith for a surgeon of his acquaintance, and delivered me to his care with a bill and receipt for ten dollars.

The purchaser took me to his apartments and commenced operations immediately. Having cut off my ears, however, he discovered signs of animation. He now rang the bell, and sent for a neighboring apothecary with whom to consult in the emergency. In case of his suspicions with regard to my existence proving ultimately correct, he, in the meantime, made an incision in my stomach, and removed several of my viscera for private dissection.

The apothecary had an idea that I was actually dead. This idea I endeavored to confute, kicking and plunging with all my might, and making the most furious contortions—for the operations of the surgeon had, in a measure, restored me to the possession of my faculties. All, however, was attributed to the effects of a new galvanic battery, wherewith the apothecary, who is really a man of information, performed several curious experiments, in which, from my personal share in their fulfillment, I could not help feeling deeply interested. It was a source of mortification to me, nevertheless,

that although I made several attempts at conversation, my powers of speech were so entirely in abeyance that I could not even open my mouth; much less, then, make reply to some ingenious but fanciful theories of which, under other circumstances, my minute acquaintance with the Hippocratic pathology would have afforded me a ready confutation.

Not being able to arrive at a conclusion, the practitioners remanded me for farther examination. I was taken up into a garret: and the surgeon's lady having accommodated me with drawers and stockings, the surgeon himself fastened my hands, and tied up my jaws with a pocket-handkerchief—then bolted the door on the outside as he hurried to his dinner, leaving me alone to silence and to meditation.

I now discovered, to my extreme delight, that I could have spoken had not my mouth been tied up by the pocket-handkerchief. Consoling myself with this reflection, I was mentally repeating some passages of the “Omnipresence of the Deity,” as is my custom before resigning myself to sleep, when two cats, of a greedy and vituperative turn, entering at a hole in the wall, leaped up with a flourish *à la Catalani*, and alighting opposite one another on my visage, betook themselves to indecorous contention for the paltry consideration of my nose.

But, as the loss of his ears proved the means of elevating to the throne of Cyrus, the Magian or Mige-Gush of Persia, and as the cutting off his nose gave Zopyrus possession of Babylon, so the loss of a few ounces of my countenance proved the salvation of my body. Aroused by the pain, and burning with indignation, I burst, at a single effort, the fastenings and the bandage. Stalking across the room I cast a glance

of contempt at the belligerents, and throwing open the sash, to their extreme horror and disappointment, precipitated myself very dexterously from the window.

The mail-robber W——, to whom I bore a singular resemblance, was at this moment passing from the city jail to the scaffold erected for his execution in the suburbs. His extreme infirmity and long-continued ill health had obtained him the privilege of remaining unmanacled; and habited in his gallows costume—one very similar to my own—he lay at full length in the bottom of the hangman's cart (which happened to be under the windows of the surgeon at the moment of my precipitation) without any other guard than the driver who was asleep, and two recruits of the sixth infantry, who were drunk.

As ill luck would have it, I alighted on my feet within the vehicle. W——, who was an acute fellow, perceived his opportunity. Leaping up immediately, he bolted out behind, and turning down an alley, was out of sight in the twinkling of an eye. The recruits, aroused by the bustle, could not exactly comprehend the merits of the transaction. Seeing, however, a man, the precise counterpart of the felon, standing upright in the cart before their eyes, they were of opinion that the rascal (meaning W——) was after making his escape (so they expressed themselves), and, having communicated this opinion to one another, they took each a dram, and then knocked me down with the butt-ends of their muskets.

It was not long ere we arrived at the place of destination. Of course, nothing could be said in my defence. Hanging was my inevitable fate. I resigned myself thereto with a feeling half stupid, half acrimonious. Being little of a cynic, I had all the sentiments of a

dog. The hangman, however, adjusted the noose about my neck. The drop fell.

I forbear to depict my sensations upon the gallows; although here undoubtedly I could speak to the point, and it is a topic upon which nothing has been well said. In fact, to write upon such a theme it is necessary to have been hanged. Every author should confine himself to matters of experience. Thus Mark Antony composed a treatise upon getting drunk.

I may just mention, however, that die I did not. My body *was*, but I had no breath *to be* suspended; and but for the knot under my left ear (which had the feel of a military stock) I dare say that I should have experienced very little inconvenience. As for the jerk given to my neck upon the falling of the drop, it merely proved a corrective to the twist afforded me by the fat gentleman in the coach.

For good reasons, however, I did my best to give the crowd the worth of their trouble. My convulsions were said to be extraordinary. My spasms it would have been difficult to beat. The populace *encored*. Several gentlemen swooned; and a multitude of ladies were carried home in hysterics. Pinxit availed himself of the opportunity to retouch, from a sketch taken upon the spot, his admirable painting of the "Marsyas flayed alive."

When I had afforded sufficient amusement, it was thought proper to remove my body from the gallows; —this the more especially as the real culprit had, in the meantime, been retaken and recognized; a fact which I was so unlucky as not to know.

Much sympathy was, of course, exercised in my behalf, and as no one made claim to my corpse, it was ordered that I should be interred in a public vault.

Here after due interval I was deposited. The sexton

departed, and I was left alone. A line of Marston's "Malcontent"—

"Death's a good fellow and keeps open house"—

struck me at that moment as a palpable lie.

I knocked off, however, the lid of my coffin, and stepped out. The place was dreadfully dreary and damp, and I became troubled with *ennui*. By way of amusement, I felt my way among the numerous coffins ranged in order around. I lifted them down, one by one, and breaking open their lids, busied myself in speculations about the mortality within.

"This," I soliloquized, tumbling over a carcass, puffy, bloated and rotund—"this has been, no doubt, in every sense of the word, an unhappy—an unfortunate man. It has been his terrible lot not to walk, but to waddle—to pass through life not like a human being, but like an elephant—not like a man, but like a rhinoceros.

"His attempts at getting on have been mere abortions, and his circumgyratory proceedings a palpable failure. Taking a step forward, it has been his misfortune to take two towards the right, and three towards the left. His studies have been confined to the poetry of Crabbe. He can have had no idea of the wonder of a *pirouette*. To him a *pas de papillon* has been an abstract conception. He has never ascended the summit of a hill. He has never viewed from any steeple the glories of a metropolis. Heat has been his mortal enemy. In the dog-days his days have been the days of a dog. Therein, he has dreamed of flames and suffocation—of mountains upon mountains—of Pelion upon Ossa. He was short of breath—to say all in a word, he was short of breath. He thought it extravagant to play upon wind instruments.

He was the inventor of self-moving fans, wind-sails and ventilators. He patronized Du Pont the bellows-maker, and died miserably in attempting to smoke a cigar. His was a case in which I feel a deep interest—a lot in which I sincerely sympathize. “But here,”—said I—“here”—and I dragged spitefully from its receptacle a gaunt, tall, and peculiar-looking form, whose remarkable appearance struck me with a sense of unwelcome familiarity—“here is a wretch entitled to no earthly commiseration.” Thus saying, in order to obtain a more distinct view of my subject, I applied my thumb and forefinger to its nose, and causing it to assume a sitting position upon the ground, held it thus, at the length of my arm, while I continued my soliloquy.

—“Entitled,” I repeated, “to no earthly commiseration. Who indeed would think of compassionating a shadow? Besides, has he not had his full share of the blessings of mortality? He was the originator of tall monuments—shot-towers—lightning-rods—Lombardy poplars. His treatise upon “Shades and Shadows” has immortalized him. He edited with distinguished ability the last edition of “South on the Bones.” He went early to college and studied pneumatics. He then came home, talked eternally, and played upon the French horn. He patronized the bagpipes. Captain Barclay, who walked against time, would not walk against *him*. Windham and Albreath were his favorite writers—his favorite artist, Phiz. He died gloriously while inhaling gas—*levique flatu corruptitur*, like the *fama pudicitiae* in Hieronymus.* He was indubitably a”—
“How can you?—how—can—you?”—interrupted

* *Tenera res in feminis fama pudicitiae, et quasi flos pulcherrimus, cito ad levem marcessit auram, levique flatu corruptitur, maxime, etc.*—Hieronymus ad Salvinam.

the object of my animadversions, gasping for breath, and tearing off, with a desperate exertion, the bandage around its jaws—"how *can* you, Mr. Lackobreath, be so infernally cruel as to pinch me in that manner by the nose? Did you not see how they had fastened up the mouth—and you *must* know—if you know anything—how vast a superfluity of breath I have to dispose of! If you do *not* know, however, sit down and you shall see. In my situation it is really a great relief to be able to open one's mouth—to be able to expatiate—to be able to communicate with a person like yourself, who do not think yourself called upon at every period to interrupt the thread of a gentleman's discourse. Interruptions are annoying and should undoubtedly be abolished—don't you think so?—no reply, I beg you,—one person is enough to be speaking at a time. I shall be done by-and-by, and then you may begin. How the devil, sir, did you get into this place?—not a word, I beseech you—been here some time myself—terrible accident!—heard of it, I suppose—awful calamity!—walking under your windows—some short while ago—about the time you were stage-struck—horrible occurrence!—heard of 'catching one's breath' eh?—hold your tongue, I tell you!—I caught somebody else's!—had always too much of my own—met Blab at the corner of the street—wouldn't give me a chance for a word—couldn't get in a syllable edgeways—attacked, consequently, with epilepsis—Blab made his escape—damn all fools!—they took me up for dead, and put me in this place—pretty doings, all of them!—heard all you said about me—every word a lie—horrible!—wonderful! outrageous!—hideous!—incomprehensible!—et cetera—et cetera—et cetera."

It is impossible to conceive my astonishment at so

unexpected a discourse, or the joy with which I became gradually convinced that the breath so fortunately caught by the gentleman (whom I soon recognized as my neighbor Windenough) was, in fact, the identical expiration mislaid by myself in the conversation with my wife. Time, place and circumstance rendered it a matter beyond question. I did not, however, immediately release my hold upon Mr. W.'s proboscis—not at least during the long period in which the inventor of Lombardy poplars continued to favor me with his explanations.

In this respect I was actuated by that habitual prudence which has ever been my predominating trait. I reflected that many difficulties might still lie in the path of my preservation which only extreme exertion on my part would be able to surmount. Many persons, I considered, are prone to estimate commodities in their possession—however valueless to the then proprietor—however troublesome or distressing—in direct ratio with the advantages to be derived by others from their attainment, or by themselves from their abandonment. Might not this be the case with Mr. Windenough? In displaying anxiety for the breath of which he was at present so willing to get rid, might I not lay myself open to the exactions of his avarice? There are scoundrels in this world, I remembered with a sigh, who will not scruple to take unfair opportunities with even a next-door neighbor, and (this remark is from Epictetus) it is precisely at that time when men are most anxious to throw off the burden of their own calamities that they feel the least desirous of relieving them in others.

Upon considerations similar to these, and still retaining my grasp upon the nose of Mr. W., I accordingly thought proper to model my reply.

“Monster!” I began in a tone of the deepest indignation, “monster! and double-winded idiot!—dost *thou*, whom for thine iniquities it has pleased Heaven to accuse with a twofold respiration—dost *thou*, I say, presume to address me in the familiar language of an old acquaintance?—‘I lie,’ forsooth! and ‘hold my tongue,’ to be sure!—pretty conversation indeed to a gentleman with a single breath!—all this, too, when I have it in my power to relieve the calamity under which thou dost so justly suffer—to curtail the superfluities of thine unhappy respiration.”

Like Brutus, I paused for a reply—with which, like a tornado, Mr. Windenough immediately overwhelmed me. Protestation followed upon protestation, and apology upon apology. There were no terms with which he was unwilling to comply, and there were none of which I failed to take the fullest advantage.

Preliminaries being at length arranged, my acquaintance delivered me the respiration; for which (having carefully examined it) I gave him afterwards a receipt.

I am aware that by many I shall be held to blame for speaking, in a manner so cursory, of a transaction so impalpable. It will be thought that I should have entered more minutely into the details of an occurrence by which—and this is very true—much new light might be thrown upon a highly interesting branch of physical philosophy.

To all this I am sorry that I cannot reply. A hint is the only answer which I am permitted to make. There were *circumstances*—but I think it much safer upon consideration to say as little as possible about an affair so delicate—*so delicate*, I repeat, and at the time involving the interests of a third party whose sulphurous

resentment I have not the least desire at this moment of incurring.

We were not long after this necessary arrangement in effecting an escape from the dungeons of the sepulchre. The united strength of our resuscitated voices was soon sufficiently apparent. Scissors, the Whig editor, republished a treatise upon "the nature and origin of subterranean noises." A reply—rejoinder—confutation—and justification—followed in the columns of a Democratic *Gazette*. It was not until the opening of the vault to decide the controversy that the appearance of Mr. Windenough and myself proved both parties to have been decidedly in the wrong.

I cannot conclude these details of some very singular passages in a life at all times sufficiently eventful, without again recalling to the attention of the reader the merits of that indiscriminate philosophy which is a sure and ready shield against those shafts of calamity which can neither be seen, felt, nor fully understood. It was in the spirit of this wisdom that, among the ancient Hebrews, it was believed the gates of Heaven would be inevitably opened to that sinner or saint who, with good lungs and implicit confidence, should vociferate the word "*Amen!*" It was in the spirit of this wisdom that, when a great plague raged at Athens, and every means had been in vain attempted for its removal, Epimenides, as Laertius relates in his second book of that philosopher, advised the erection of a shrine and temple "to the proper God."

THE MAN THAT WAS USED UP.

A TALE OF THE LATE BUGABOO AND KICKAPOO CAMPAIGN.

*Pleurez, pleurez, mes yeux, et fondez vous en eau,
La moitié de ma vie a mis l'autre au tombeau !*

CORNEILLE.

I cannot just now remember when or where I first made the acquaintance of that truly fine-looking fellow, Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith. Some one *did* introduce me to the gentleman, I am sure—at some public meeting, I know very well—held about something of great importance, no doubt—at some place or other, I feel convinced—whose name I have unaccountably forgotten. The truth is, that the introduction was attended, upon my part, with a degree of anxious embarrassment which operated to prevent any definite impressions of either time or place. I am constitutionally nervous—this, with me, is a family failing, and I can't help it. In especial, the slightest appearance of mystery—of any point I cannot exactly comprehend—puts me at once into a pitiable state of agitation.

There was something, as it were, remarkable—yes, *remarkable*, although this is but a feeble term to express my full meaning—about the entire individuality of the personage in question. He was perhaps six feet in height, and of a presence singularly commanding. There was an *air distingué* pervading the whole man, which spoke of high breeding and hinted at high birth. Upon

this topic—the topic of Smith's personal appearance—I have a kind of melancholy satisfaction in being minute. His head of hair would have done honor to a Brutus; nothing could be more richly flowing or possess a brighter gloss. It was of a jetty black; which was also the color, or more properly the no color, of his unimaginable whiskers. You perceive I cannot speak of these latter without enthusiasm; it is not too much to say that they were the handsomest pair of whiskers under the sun. At all events, they encircled, and at times partially overshadowed, a mouth utterly unequaled. Here were the most entirely even and the most brilliantly white of all conceivable teeth. From between them, upon every proper occasion, issued a voice of surpassing clearness, melody and strength. In the matter of eyes, also, my acquaintance was pre-eminently endowed. Either one of such a pair was worth a couple of the ordinary ocular organs. They were of a deep hazel, exceedingly large and lustrous; and there was perceptible about them, ever and anon, just that amount of interesting obliquity which gives pregnancy to expression.

The bust of the General was unquestionably the finest bust I ever saw. For your life, you could not have found a fault with its wonderful proportion. This rare peculiarity set off to great advantage a pair of shoulders which would have called up a blush of conscious inferiority into the countenance of the marble Apollo. I have a passion for fine shoulders, and may say that I never beheld them in perfection before. The arms altogether were admirably modeled. Nor were the lower limbs less superb. These were, indeed, the *ne plus ultra* of good legs. Every connoisseur in such matters admitted the legs to be good. There was

neither too much flesh, nor too little, neither rudeness nor fragility. I could not imagine a more graceful curve than that of the *os femoris*, and there was just that due gentle prominence in the rear of the *fibula* which goes to the conformation of a properly proportioned calf. I wish to God my young and talented friend Chipochipino, the sculptor, had but seen the legs of Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith.

But although men so absolutely fine-looking are neither as plenty as raisins or blackberries, still I could not bring myself to believe that *the remarkable* something to which I alluded just now—that the odd air of *je ne sais quoi* which hung about my new acquaintance—lay altogether, or indeed at all, in the supreme excellence of his bodily endowments. Perhaps it might be traced to the *manner*; yet here again I could not pretend to be positive. There *was* a primness, not to say stiffness, in his carriage—a degree of measured, and, if I may express it, of rectangular precision, attending his every movement, which, observed in a more diminutive figure, would have had the least little savor in the world, of affectation, pomposity or constraint, but which, noticed in a gentleman of his undoubted dimensions, was readily placed to the account of reserve, *hauteur*—of a commendable sense, in short, of what is due to the dignity of colossal proportion.

The kind friend who presented me to General Smith whispered in my ear some few words of comment upon the man. “He was a *remarkable* man—a *very* remarkable man—indeed, one of the *most* remarkable men of the age. He was an especial favorite, too, with the ladies, chiefly on account of his high reputation for courage.

“In *that* point he is unrivaled, indeed he is a perfect

desperado, a downright fire-eater, and no mistake," said my friend, here dropping his voice excessively low, and thrilling me with the mystery of his tone.

"A downright fire-eater, and *no* mistake. Showed *that*, I should say, to some purpose in the late tremendous swamp-fight away down South with the Bugaboo and Kickapoo Indians." [Here my friend opened his eyes to some extent.] "Bless my soul!—blood and thunder, and all that!—*prodigies* of valor!—heard of him, of course?—you know, he's the man—"

"Man alive, how *do* you do? why, how *are* ye? *very* glad to see ye, indeed!" here interrupted the General himself, seizing my companion by the hand as he drew near, and bowing stiffly but profoundly as I was presented. I then thought (and I think so still) that I never heard a clearer nor a stronger voice, nor beheld a finer set of teeth, but I *must* say that I was sorry for the interruption just at that moment, as owing to the whispers and insinuations aforesaid, my interest had been greatly excited in the hero of the Bugaboo and Kickapoo campaign.

However, the delightfully luminous conversation of Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith soon completely dissipated this chagrin. My friend leaving us immediately, we had quite a long *tête-à-tête*, and I was not only pleased but *really* instructed. I never heard a more fluent talker, or a man of greater general information. With becoming modesty he forbore, nevertheless, to touch upon the theme I had just then most at heart—I mean the mysterious circumstances attending the Bugaboo war, and on my own part, what I conceive to be a proper sense of delicacy forbade me to broach the subject, although, in truth, I was exceedingly tempted to do so. I perceived, too, that the

gallant soldier preferred topics of philosophical interest, and that he delighted especially in commenting upon the rapid march of mechanical invention. Indeed, lead him where I would, this was a point to which he invariably came back.

"There is nothing at all like it," he would say; "we are a wonderful people and live in a wonderful age. Parachutes and railroads, man-traps and spring-guns! Our steamboats are upon every sea, and the Nassau balloon packet is about to run regular trips (fare either way only twenty pounds sterling) between London and Timbuctoo. And who shall calculate the immense influence upon social life, upon arts, upon commerce, upon literature, which will be the immediate result of the great principles of electro-magnetics! Nor is this all, let me assure you! There is really no end to the march of invention. The most wonderful, the most ingenious, and let me add, Mr.—Mr.—Thompson, I believe is your name—let me add, I say, the most *useful*, the most truly *useful* mechanical contrivances, are daily springing up like mushrooms, if I may so express myself, or more figuratively, like ah—grasshoppers—like grasshoppers, Mr. Thompson—about us and ah—ah—ah, around us!"

Thompson, to be sure, is not my name; but it is needless to say that I left General Smith with a heightened interest in the man, with an exalted opinion of his conversational powers, and a deep sense of the valuable privileges we enjoy in living in this age of mechanical invention. My curiosity, however, had not been altogether satisfied, and I resolved to prosecute immediate inquiry among my acquaintances, touching the Brevet Brigadier-General himself, and particularly respecting the tremendous events *quorum pars magna fuit*, during the Bugaboo and Kickapoo campaign.

The first opportunity which presented itself, and which (*horresco referens*) I did not in the least scruple to seize, occurred at the church of the Reverend Doctor Drummummupp, where I found myself established one Sunday just at sermon-time, not only in the pew, but by the side of that worthy and communicative little friend of mine, Miss Tabitha T. Thus seated, I congratulated myself, and with much reason, upon the very flattering state of affairs. If any person knew anything about Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith, that person, it was clear to me, was Miss Tabitha T. We telegraphed a few signals, and then commenced, *sotto voce*, a brisk *tête-à-tête*.

“Smith!” said she, in reply to my very earnest inquiry; “Smith!—why, not General John A. B. C.? Bless me, I thought you *knew* all about *him*! This is a wonderfully inventive age! Horrid affair that!—a bloody set of wretches, those Kickapoos!—fought like a hero—prodigies of valor—immortal renown. Smith! Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C.!—why, you know, he’s the man—”

“Man,” here broke in Doctor Drummummupp, at the top of his voice, and with a thump that came near knocking the pulpit about our ears, “man that is born of a woman hath but a short time to live; he cometh up and is cut down like a flower!” I started to the extremity of the pew, and perceived by the animated looks of the divine that the wrath which had nearly proved fatal to the pulpit had been excited by the whispers of the lady and myself. There was no help for it; so I submitted with a good grace, and listened in all the martyrdom of dignified silence to the balance of that very capital discourse.

Next evening found me a somewhat late visitor at

the Rantipole Theatre, where I felt sure of satisfying my curiosity at once, by merely stepping into the box of those exquisite specimens of affability and omniscience, the Misses Arabella and Miranda Cognoscenti. That fine tragedian, Climax, was doing Iago to a very crowded house, and I experienced some little difficulty in making my wishes understood; especially as our box was next the slips, and completely overlooked the stage.

"Smith!" said Miss Arabella, as she at length comprehended the purport of my query; "Smith?—why, not General John A. B. C.?"

"Smith?" inquired Miranda musingly. "God bless me, did you ever behold a finer figure?"

"Never, madam, but *do* tell me—"

"Or such imitable grace?"

"Never, upon my word!—but pray inform me—"

"Or so just an appreciation of stage effect?"

"Madam!"

"Or a more delicate sense of the true beauties of Shakspeare? Be so good as to look at that leg!"

"The devil!" and I turned again to her sister.

"Smith!" said she, "why, not General John A. B. C.? Horrid affair that, wasn't it?—great wretches, those Bugaboos—savage and so on, but we live in a wonderfully inventive age!—Smith!—oh, yes! great man!—perfect desperado—immortal renown—prodigies of valor! *Never heard!*" [This was given in a scream.] "Bless my soul!—why, he's the man—"

"——Man-dragora
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday!"

here roared out Climax just in my ear, and shaking his

fist in my face all the time, in a way that I *couldn't* stand, and I *wouldn't*. I left the Misses Cognoscenti immediately, went behind the scenes forthwith, and gave the beggarly scoundrel such a thrashing as I trust he will remember to the day of his death.

At the *soirée* of the lovely widow Mrs. Kathleen O'Trump, I was confident that I should meet with no similar disappointment. Accordingly, I was no sooner seated at the card-table, with my pretty hostess for a *vis-à-vis*, than I propounded those questions the solution of which had become a matter so essential to my peace.

"Smith?" said my partner, "why, not General John A. B. C.? Horrid affair that, wasn't it?—diamonds, did you say?—terrible wretches, those Kickapoos!—we are playing *whist*, if you please, Mr. Tattle—however, this is the age of invention, most certainly *the* age, one may say—*the* age *par excellence*—speak French!—oh, quite a hero—perfect desperado!—no *hearts*, Mr. Tattle?—I don't believe it!—immortal renown and all that—prodigies of valor!—*Never heard!*!—why, bless me, he's the man!"

"Mann?—*Captain* Mann?" here screamed some little feminine interloper from the farthest corner of the room. "Are you talking about Captain Mann and the duel?—oh, I *must* hear—do tell—go on, Mrs. O'Trump!—do now go on!" And go on Mrs. O'Trump did—all about a certain Captain Mann, who was either shot or hung, or should have been both shot and hung. Yes! Mrs. O'Trump, she went on, and I—I went off. There was no chance of hearing anything farther that evening in regard to Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith.

Still I consoled myself with the reflection that the tide of ill luck would not run against me forever, and

so determined to make a bold push for information at the rout of that bewitching little angel, the graceful Mrs. Pirouette.

“Smith?” said Mrs. P., as we whirled about together in a *pas de zéphyr*, “Smith?—why, not General John A. B. C.? Dreadful business, that of the Bugaboos, wasn’t it?—terrible creatures, those Indians!—*do* turn out your toes! I really am ashamed of you—man of great courage, poor fellow!—but this is a wonderful age for invention—Oh, dear me, I’m out of breath—quite a desperado—prodigies of valor—*never heard!*! —can’t believe it—I shall have to sit down and enlighten you—Smith! why, he’s the man—”

“Man-Fred, I tell you!” here bawled out Miss Bas-Bleu, as I led Mrs. Pirouette to a seat. “Did ever anybody hear the like? It’s Man-Fred, I say, and not at all by any means Man-Friday.” Here Miss Bas-Bleu beckoned to me in a very peremptory manner; and I was obliged, will I nill I, to leave Mrs. P. for the purpose of deciding a dispute touching the title of a certain poetical drama of Lord Byron’s. Although I pronounced, with great promptness, that the true title was *Man-Friday*, and not by any means *Man-Fred*, yet when I returned to seek Mrs. Pirouette she was not to be discovered, and I made my retreat from the house in a very bitter spirit of animosity against the whole race of the Bas-Bleus.

Matters had now assumed a really serious aspect, and I resolved to call at once upon my particular friend Mr. Theodore Sinvate; for I knew that here at least I should get something like definite information.

“Smith?” said he, in his well-known peculiar way of drawling out his syllables; “Smith?—why, not General John A. B. C.? Savage affair, that with the

Kickapo-o-o-os, wasn't it? Say! don't you think so?—perfect despera-a-ado—great pity, 'pon my honor!—wonderfully inventive age!—pro-o-odiges of valor! By-the-bye, did you ever hear about Captain Ma-a-a-a-n?"

"Captain Mann be d—d!" said I, "please to go on with your story."

"Hem!—oh, well!—quite *la même cho-o-ose*, as we say in France. Smith, eh? Brigadier-General John A—B—C.? I say"—[here Mr. S. thought proper to put his finger to the side of his nose]—"I say, you don't mean to insinuate now, really and truly and conscientiously, that you don't know all about that affair of Smith's as well as I do, eh? Smith? John A—B—C.? Why, bless me, he's the ma-a-an—"

"*Mr. Sinivate*," said I imploringly, "*is* he the man in the mask?"

"No-o-o!" said he, looking wise, "nor the man in the mo-o-on." This reply I considered a pointed and positive insult, and so left the house at once in high dudgeon, with a firm resolve to call my friend Mr. Sinivate to a speedy account for his ungentlemanly conduct and ill-breeding.

In the meantime, however, I had no notion of being thwarted touching the information I desired. There was one resource left me yet. I would go to the fountain-head. I would call forthwith upon the General himself, and demand, in explicit terms, a solution of this abominable piece of mystery. Here, at least, there should be no chance for equivocation. I would be plain, positive, peremptory—as short as pie-crust—as concise as Tacitus or Montesquieu.

It was early when I called, and the General was dressing; but I pleaded urgent business, and was shown at once into his bed-room by an old negro

valet, who remained in attendance during my visit. As I entered the chamber, I looked about of course for the occupant, but did not immediately perceive him. There was a large and exceedingly odd-looking bundle of something which lay close by my feet on the floor, and as I was not in the best humor in the world, I gave it a kick out of the way.

"Hem! ahem! rather civil that, I should say!" said the bundle, in one of the smallest and altogether the funniest little voices, between a squeak and a whistle, that I ever heard in all the days of my existence.

"Ahem! rather civil that, I should observe."

I fairly shouted with terror, and made off at a tangent, into the farthest extremity of the room.

"God bless me! my dear fellow," here again whistled the bundle, "what—what—what—why, what *is* the matter? I really believe you don't know me at all."

What *could* I say to all this—what *could* I? I staggered into an arm-chair, and with staring eyes and open mouth, awaited the solution of the wonder.

"Strange you shouldn't know me though, isn't it?" presently re-squeaked the nondescript, which I now perceived was performing upon the floor some inexplicable evolution, very analogous to the drawing on of a stocking. There was only a single leg, however, apparent.

"Strange you shouldn't know me though, isn't it? Pompey, bring me that leg!" Here Pompey handed the bundle a very capital cork leg, already dressed, which it screwed on in a trice; and then it stood up before my eyes.

"And a bloody action it *was*," continued the thing, as if in a soliloquy; "but then one mustn't fight with the Bugaboos and Kickapoos, and think of coming off

with a mere scratch. Pompey, I'll thank you now for that arm. Thomas" [turning to me] "is decidedly the best hand at a cork leg; but if you should ever want an arm, my dear fellow, you must really let me recommend you to Bishop." Here Pompey screwed on an arm.

"We had rather hot work of it, that you may say. Now, you dog, slip on my shoulders and bosom! Pettitt makes the best shoulders, but for a bosom you will have to go to Ducrow."

"Bosom!" said I.

"Pompey, will you *never* be ready with that wig? Scalping is a rough process, after all; but then you can procure such a capital scratch at De L'Orme's."

"Scratch!"

"Now, you nigger, my teeth! For a *good* set of these you had better go to Parmly's at once; high prices, but excellent work. I swallowed some very capital articles, though, when the big Bugaboo rammed me down with the butt end of his rifle."

"Butt end! ram down!! my eye!!"

"Oh yes, by-the-bye, my eye—here, Pompey, you scamp, screw it in! Those Kickapoos are not so very slow at a gouge, but he's a belied man that Dr. Williams, after all; you can't imagine how well I see with the eyes of his make."

I now began very clearly to perceive that the object before me was nothing more nor less than my new acquaintance, Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith. The manipulations of Pompey had made, I must confess, a very striking difference in the appearance of the personal man. The voice, however, still puzzled me no little; but even this apparent mystery was speedily cleared up.

"Pompey, you black rascal," squeaked the General,

“I really do believe you would let me go out without my palate.”

Hereupon the negro, grumbling out an apology, went up to his master, opened his mouth with the knowing air of a horse-jockey, and adjusted therein a somewhat singular-looking machine, in a very dexterous manner, that I could not altogether comprehend. The alteration, however, in the entire expression of the General’s countenance was instantaneous and surprising. When he again spoke, his voice had resumed all that rich melody and strength which I had noticed upon our original introduction.

“D—n the vagabonds!” said he, in so clear a tone that I positively started at the change. “D—n the vagabonds! they not only knocked in the roof of my mouth, but took the trouble to cut off at least seven-eighths of my tongue. There isn’t Bonfanti’s equal, however, in America, for really good articles of this description. I can recommend you to him with confidence” [here the General bowed], “and assure you that I have the greatest pleasure in so doing.”

I acknowledged his kindness in my best manner, and took leave of him at once, with a perfect understanding of the true state of affairs—with a full comprehension of the mystery which had troubled me so long. It was evident. It was a clear case. Brevet Brigadier-General John A. B. C. Smith was the man—*was the man that was used up.*

THE BUSINESS MAN.

Method is the soul of business.—OLD SAYING.

I am a business man. I am a methodical man. Method is *the* thing, after all. But there are no people I more heartily despise than your eccentric fools who prate about method without understanding it; attending strictly to its letter and violating its spirit. These fellows are always doing the most out-of-the-way things in what they call an orderly manner. Now here—I conceive—is a positive paradox. True method appertains to the ordinary and the obvious alone, and cannot be applied to the *outré*. What definite idea can a body attach to such expressions as “methodical Jack o’ Dandy,” or “a systematical Will of the Wisp?”

My notions upon this head might not have been so clear as they are but for a fortunate accident which happened to me when I was a very little boy. A good-hearted old Irish nurse (whom I shall not forget in my will) took me up one day by the heels, when I was making more noise than was necessary, and swinging me round two or three times, d—d my eyes for “a skreeching little spalpeen,” and then knocked my head into a cocked hat against the bed-post. This, I say, decided my fate and made my fortune. A bump arose at once on my sinciput, and turned out to be as pretty an organ of *order* as one shall see on a summer’s day. Hence that positive appetite for system and regularity which has made me the distinguished man of business that I am.

If there is anything on earth I hate, it is a genius. Your geniuses are all arrant asses—the greater the genius the greater the ass, and to this rule there is no exception whatever. Especially, you cannot make a man of business out of a genius, any more than money out of a Jew, or the best nutmegs out of pine-knots. The creatures are always going off at a tangent into some fantastic employment or ridiculous speculation, entirely at variance with the “fitness of things,” and having no business whatever to be considered as a business at all. Thus you may tell these characters immediately by the nature of their occupations. If you ever perceive a man setting up as a merchant or a manufacturer; or going into the cotton or tobacco trade, or any of those eccentric pursuits; or getting to be a dry-goods dealer, or soap-boiler, or something of that kind; or pretending to be a lawyer, or a blacksmith, or a physician—anything out of the usual way—you may set him down at once as a genius, and then, according to the rule of three, he’s an ass.

Now I am not in any respect a genius, but a regular business man. My day-book and ledger will evince this in a minute. They are well kept, though I say it myself; and, in my general habits of accuracy and punctuality, I am not to be beat by a clock. Moreover, my occupations have been always made to chime in with the ordinary habitudes of my fellow-men. Not that I feel the least indebted upon this score to my exceedingly weak-minded parents, who, beyond doubt, would have made an arrant genius of me at last if my guardian angel had not come in good time to the rescue. In biography the truth is everything, and in autobiography it is especially so—yet I scarcely hope to be believed when I state, however solemnly, that my poor father put

me, when I was about fifteen years of age, into the counting-house of what he termed "a respectable hardware and commission merchant, doing a capital bit of business!" A capital bit of fiddlestick! However, the consequence of this folly was that in two or three days I had to be sent home to my button-headed family in a high state of fever, and with a most violent and dangerous pain in the *sinciput*, all round about my organ of order. It was nearly a gone case with me then—just touch-and-go for six weeks—the physicians giving me up and all that sort of thing. But, although I suffered much, I was a thankful boy in the main. I was saved from being a "respectable hardware and commission merchant, doing a capital bit of business," and I felt grateful to the protuberance which had been the means of my salvation, as well as to the kind-hearted female who had originally put these means within my reach.

The most of boys run away from home at ten or twelve years of age, but I waited till I was sixteen. I don't know that I should have gone even then if I had not happened to hear my old mother talk about setting me up on my own hook in the grocery way. The *grocery* way!—only think of that! I resolved to be off forthwith, and try and establish myself in some *decent* occupation, without dancing attendance any longer upon the caprices of these eccentric old people, and running the risk of being made a genius of in the end. In this project I succeeded perfectly well at the first effort, and by the time I was fairly eighteen found myself doing an extensive and profitable business in the Tailor's Walking-Advertisement line.

I was enabled to discharge the onerous duties of this profession only by that rigid adherence to system which formed the leading feature of my mind. A scrupulous

method characterized my actions as well as my accounts. In my case it was method—not money—which made the man: at least all of him that was not made by the tailor whom I served. At nine every morning I called upon that individual for the clothes of the day. Ten o'clock found me in some fashionable promenade or other place of public amusement. The precise regularity with which I turned my handsome person about, so as to bring successively into view every portion of the suit upon my back, was the admiration of all the knowing men in the trade. Noon never passed without my bringing home a customer to the house of my employers, Messrs. Cut and Comeagain. I say this proudly, but with tears in my eyes—for the firm proved themselves the basest of ingrates. The little account about which we quarreled and finally parted, cannot, in any item, be thought overcharged by gentlemen really conversant with the nature of the business. Upon this point, however, I feel a degree of proud satisfaction in permitting the reader to judge for himself. My bill ran thus:

<i>Messrs. Cut and Comeagain, Merchant Tailors,</i>	<i>To Peter Proffit, Walking Advertiser,</i>	Drs.
July 10. To promenade, as usual, and customer brought home . .	\$00	25
July 11. To do. do. do.		25
July 12. To one lie, second-class; damaged black cloth sold for invisible green		25
July 13. To one lie, first-class, extra quality and size; recommending milled satinet as broadcloth		75
July 20. To purchasing brand-new paper collar or dickey, to set off grey Petersham		2
Aug. 15. To wearing double-padded bobtail frock (thermometer 76 in the shade)		25
Aug. 16. Standing on one leg three hours, to show off new-style strapped pants, at 12½ cents per leg per hour.		37½
Aug. 17. To promenade, as usual, and large customer brought (fat man)		50
Aug. 18. To do. do. (medium size)		25
Aug. 19. To do. do. (small man and bad pay)		6
		\$2 96½

The item chiefly disputed in this bill was the very moderate charge of two pennies for the dickey. Upon my word of honor, this *was not* an unreasonable price for that dickey. It was one of the cleanest and prettiest little dickeys I ever saw ; and I have good reason to believe that it effected the sale of three Petershams. The elder partner of the firm, however, would allow me only one penny of the charge, and took it upon himself to show in what manner four of the same-sized conveniences could be got out of a sheet of foolscap. But it is needless to say that I stood upon the *principle* of the thing. Business is business, and should be done in a business way. There was no *system* whatever in swindling me out of a penny—a clear fraud of fifty per cent—no *method* in any respect. I left at once the employment of Messrs. Cut and Comeagain, and set up in the Eye-Sore line by myself—one of the most lucrative, respectable and independent of the ordinary occupations.

My strict integrity, economy and rigorous business habits, here again came into play. I found myself driving a flourishing trade, and soon became a marked man upon "Change." The truth is, I never dabbled in flashy matters, but jogged on in the good old sober routine of the calling—a calling in which I should, no doubt, have remained to the present hour, but for a little accident which happened to me in the prosecution of one of the usual business operations of the profession. Whenever a rich old hunk, or prodigal heir, or bankrupt corporation, gets into the notion of putting up a palace, there is no such thing in the world as stopping either of them, and this every intelligent person knows. The fact in question is indeed the basis of the Eye-Sore trade. As soon, therefore, as a building project is fairly afoot by one of these parties, we merchants secure a

nice corner of the lot in contemplation, or a prime little situation just adjoining or right in front. This done, we wait until the palace is half-way up, and then we pay some tasty architect to run us up an ornamental mud hovel, right against it ; or a Down-East or Dutch Pagoda, or a pig-sty, or an ingenious little bit of fancy work, either Esquimaux, Kickapoo, or Hottentot. Of course, we can't afford to take these structures down under a bonus of five hundred per cent upon the prime cost of our lot and plaster. *Can we?* I ask the question. I ask it of business men. It would be irrational to suppose that we can. And yet there was a rascally corporation which asked me to do this very thing—this *very thing!* I did not reply to their absurd proposition, of course ; but I felt it a duty to go that same night and lampblack the whole of their palace. For this, the unreasonable villains clapped me into jail ; and the gentleman of the Eye-Sore trade could not well avoid cutting my connection when I came out.

The Assault and Battery business, into which I was now forced to adventure for a livelihood, was somewhat ill adapted to the delicate nature of my constitution ; but I went to work in it with a good heart, and found my account, here as heretofore, in those stern habits of methodical accuracy which had been thumped into me by that delightful old nurse—I would indeed be the basest of men not to remember her well in my will. By observing, as I say, the strictest system in all my dealings, and keeping a well-regulated set of books, I was enabled to get over many serious difficulties, and, in the end, to establish myself very decently in the profession. The truth is, that few individuals in any line did a snugger little business than I. I will just copy a page or so out of my day-book ; and this will save me the

necessity of blowing my own trumpet—a contemptible practice, of which no high-minded man will be guilty. Now, the day-book is a thing that don't lie.

“Jan. 1. New Year's day. Met Snap in the street, groggy. Mem—he'll do. Met Gruff shortly afterwards, blind drunk. Mem—he'll answer too. Entered both gentlemen in my ledger, and opened a running account with each.

“Jan. 2. Saw Snap at the Exchange, and went up and trod on his toe. Doubled his fist and knocked me down. Good!—got up again. Some trifling difficulty with Bag, my attorney. I want the damages at a thousand, but he says that, for so simple a knock-down, we can't lay them at more than five hundred. Mem—must get rid of Bag—*no system* at all.

“Jan. 3. Went to the theatre, to look for Gruff. Saw him sitting in a side box, in the second tier, between a fat lady and a lean one. Quizzed the whole party through an opera-glass till I saw the fat lady blush and whisper to G. Went round, then, into the box, and put my nose within reach of his hand. Wouldn't pull it—no go. Blew it, and tried again—no go. Sat down then, and winked at the lean lady, when I had the high satisfaction of finding him lift me up by the nape of the neck, and fling me over into the pit. Neck dislocated, and right leg capitally splintered. Went home in high glee, drank a bottle of champagne, and booked the young man for five thousand. Bag says it'll do.

“Feb. 15. Compromised the case of Mr. Snap. Amount entered in journal—fifty cents—which see.

“Feb. 16. Cast by that villain Gruff, who made me a present of five dollars. Costs of suit, four dollars and twenty-five cents. Net profit—see journal—seventy-five cents.”

Now, here is a clear gain, in a very brief period, of no less than one dollar and twenty-five cents—this is in the mere cases of Snap and Gruff; and I solemnly assure the reader that these extracts are taken at random from my day-book.

It's an old saying, and a true one, however, that money is nothing in comparison with health. I found the exactions of the profession somewhat too much for my delicate state of body; and discovering, at last, that I was knocked all out of shape, so that I didn't know very well what to make of the matter, and so that my friends, when they met me in the street, couldn't tell that I was Peter Proffit at all, it occurred to me that the best expedient I could adopt was to alter my line of business. I turned my attention, therefore, to Mud-Dabbling, and continued it for some years.

The worst of this occupation is that too many people take a fancy to it, and the competition is in consequence excessive. Every ignoramus of a fellow who finds that he hasn't brains in sufficient quantity to make his way as a walking advertiser, or an eye-sore prig, or a salt-and-batter man, thinks, of course, that he'll answer very well as a dabbler of mud. But there never was entertained a more erroneous idea than that it requires no brains to mud-dabble. Especially, there is nothing to be made in this way without *method*. I did only a retail business myself, but my old habits of *system* carried me swimmingly along. I selected my street-crossing, in the first place, with great deliberation, and I never put down a broom in any part of the town *but that*. I took care, too, to have a nice little puddle at hand, which I could get at in a minute. By these means I got to be well known as a man to be trusted; and this is one-half the battle, let me tell you, in trade. Nobody

ever failed to pitch *me* a copper and got over *my* crossing with a clean pair of pantaloons. And, as my business habits in this respect were sufficiently understood, I never met with any attempt at imposition. I wouldn't have put up with it if I had. Never imposing upon any one myself, I suffered no one to play the possum with me. The frauds of the banks, of course, I couldn't help. Their suspension put me to ruinous inconvenience. These, however, are not individuals, but corporations; and corporations, it is very well known, have neither bodies to be kicked nor souls to be damned.

I was making money at this business, when, in an evil moment, I was induced to merge in the Cur-Spattering—a somewhat analogous, but by no means so respectable a profession. My location, to be sure, was an excellent one, being central, and I had capital blacking and brushes. My little dog, too, was quite fat and up to all varieties of snuff. He had been in the trade a long time, and, I may say, understood it. Our general routine was this:—Pompey, having rolled himself well in the mud, sat upon end at the shop door until he observed a dandy approaching in bright boots. He then proceeded to meet him, and gave the Wellingtons a rub or two with his wool. Then the dandy swore very much, and looked about for a boot-black. There I was, full in his view, with blacking and brushes. It was only a minute's work, and then came a sixpence. This did moderately well for a time;—in fact I was not avaricious, but my dog was. I allowed him a third of the profit, but he was advised to insist upon half. This I couldn't stand—so we quarreled and parted.

I next tried my hand at the organ-grinding for a while, and may say that I made out pretty well. It is

a plain, straightforward business, and requires no particular abilities. You can get a music-mill for a mere song, and to put it in order you have but to open the works and give them three or four smart raps with a hammer. It improves the tone of the thing for business purposes more than you can imagine. This done, you have only to stroll along with the mill on your back until you see tan-bark in the street and a knocker wrapped in buckskin. Then you stop and grind ; looking as if you meant to stop and grind till dooms-day. Presently a window opens, and somebody pitches you a sixpence, with a request to "Hush up and go on," etc. I am aware that some grinders have actually afforded to "go on" for this sum, but for my part, I found the necessary outlay of capital too great to permit of my "going on" under a shilling.

At this occupation I did a good deal, but somehow I was not quite satisfied, and so finally abandoned it. The truth is, I labored under the disadvantage of having no monkey—and American streets are *so* muddy, and a democratic rabble is *so* obtrusive and so full of demnition mischievous little boys.

I was now out of employment for some months, but at length succeeded, by dint of great interest, in procuring a situation in the Sham-Post. The duties here are simple and not altogether unprofitable. For example:—very early in the morning I had to make up my packet of sham letters. Upon the inside of each of these I had to scrawl a few lines—on any subject which occurred to me as sufficiently mysterious—signing all the epistles Tom Dobson, or Bobby Tompkins, or anything in that way. Having folded and sealed all, and stamped them with sham post-marks—New Orleans, Bengal, Botany Bay, or any other place a great way

off—I set out forthwith upon my daily route as if in a very great hurry. I always called at the big houses to deliver the letters and receive the postage. Nobody hesitates at paying for a letter—especially for a double one—people are *such* fools—and it was no trouble to get round a corner before there was time to open the epistles. The worst of this profession was that I had to walk so much and so fast, and so frequently to vary my route. Besides, I had serious scruples of conscience. I can't bear to hear innocent individuals abused—and the way the whole town took to cursing Tom Dobson and Bobby Tompkins was really awful to hear. I washed my hands of the matter in disgust.

My eighth and last speculation has been in the Cat-Growing way. I have found this a most pleasant and lucrative business, and really no trouble at all. The country, it is well known, has become infested with cats—so much so of late that a petition for relief, most numerously and respectably signed, was brought before the Legislature at its late memorable session. The Assembly, at this epoch, was unusually well-informed, and having passed many other wise and wholesome enactments, it crowned all with the Cat Act. In its original form, this law offered a premium for *cat-heads* (fourpence apiece), but the Senate succeeded in amending the main clause, so as to substitute the word "*tails*" for "*heads*." This amendment was so obviously proper that the house concurred in it *nem. con.*

As soon as the Governor had signed the bill, I invested my whole estate in the purchase of Toms and Tabbies. At first, I could only afford to feed them upon mice (which are cheap), but they fulfilled the Scriptural injunction at so marvelous a rate that I at length considered it my best policy to be liberal, and so indulged

them in oysters and turtle. Their tails at a legislative price, now bring me in a good income ; for I have discovered a way in which, by means of Macassar oil, I can force three crops in a year. It delights me to find, too, that the animals soon get accustomed to the thing, and would rather have the appendages cut off than otherwise. I consider myself, therefore, a made man, and am bargaining for a country-seat on the Hudson.



215

25

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